



AMAA

NEWS



Together we shall overcome trials and tribulations and raise the glowing torch of His light high and embrace peace in Him.

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Cover Photo: A view of Berd, a border village in Tavush Region of Armenia (Photo taken by Arman Sargsyan of AMAA-Armenia and designed by Vahak Janbazian - Caspianseal.com).

Trials and Tribulations

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. John 16:33

By Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO

The internet is a depository for a wealth of information and knowledge on a vast spectrum of subjects, available 24/7 to a rainbow of people around the planet.

The internet has also grown to become a depository of half-truths, false news, and an abundant storage of hatred, lies and immorality.

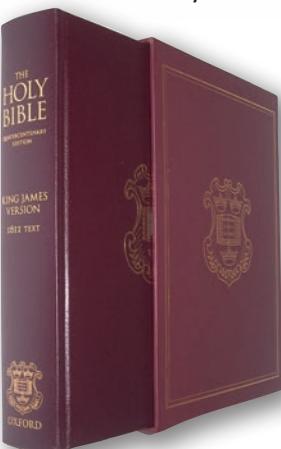
The key to its value lies in the careful scrutiny of what a researcher is seeking.

A treasure that I recently came across on the internet is the authoritative 1611 King James Bible (the picture illustrates a copy of the special edition marking the 400th anniversary of the translation and publication in 2011), the first Bible printed by the prestigious Oxford University Press in the year 1611. The 400th anniversary volume reprinted the large body of preliminary matter, which includes genealogies, maps, and lists of readings, as well as the translator's preface to the reader; content removed from later editions.



What attracted me to this first Oxford University Press edition of the Bible is where the editors and authoritative scholars placed Armenia in the genealogy of civilizations. This group of learned scholars seal their knowledge of man, religion and humanity in the opening pages of the first edition of the Bible in print, asserting that ARMENIA is the Cradle of Civilization.

This knowledge is certainly not alien to historians. The renowned British political leader and Prime Minister William E. Gladstone is credited with echoing that common knowledge of history quoting, "Armenia is the cradle of civilization." However, seeing the illustration in a print of the Bible places the truth on an even higher plateau.



This statement is not to boast about ourselves but rather in the grace of the Lord whose light we have reflected through centuries.

This cradle of civilization, the first Christian nation in the world, having 'set the light on the hill,' having 'raised it on a candlestick,' has broadly contributed to the illumination of the world. This martyred nation, witnessing for Christ the Lord, once again and in different parts of the world, is on a rendezvous with a myriad of trials and tribulations.

From the threat of hunger and famine in Lebanon to an economic and commercial siege in Syria. From an existential threat to Artsakh to unprovoked military aggression on the peaceful border population in Armenia. Add an unprecedented assault of a vile pandemic called COVID-19, and you can imagine the magnitude and severity of the trials and tribulations our people are undergoing today.

"In the world you will have tribulation" said our Lord and added, "But take heart; I have overcome the world." Faith will sustain us, and with faith, we have the victory in sight and 'eyes set on the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'

On the path toward the high calling lies the mission of the AMAA.

A century after the Genocide, our Homeland and surviving communities in the Near East, among other threats, remain under the direct and declared threat of the perpetrator.

With your generous support, we feed the hungry and quench the thirsty; secure our border population; support education and create opportunities for learning. We sponsor children, including those of martyred conscripts, until they are ready and strong to defend the land. We care for orphaned parents and the elderly and help them sustain a decent living. We help move our people from war zones in the world to the security and peace of a Homeland. With indefatigable zeal and determination, we raise the burning torch high on the hill and illuminate the ends of the world.

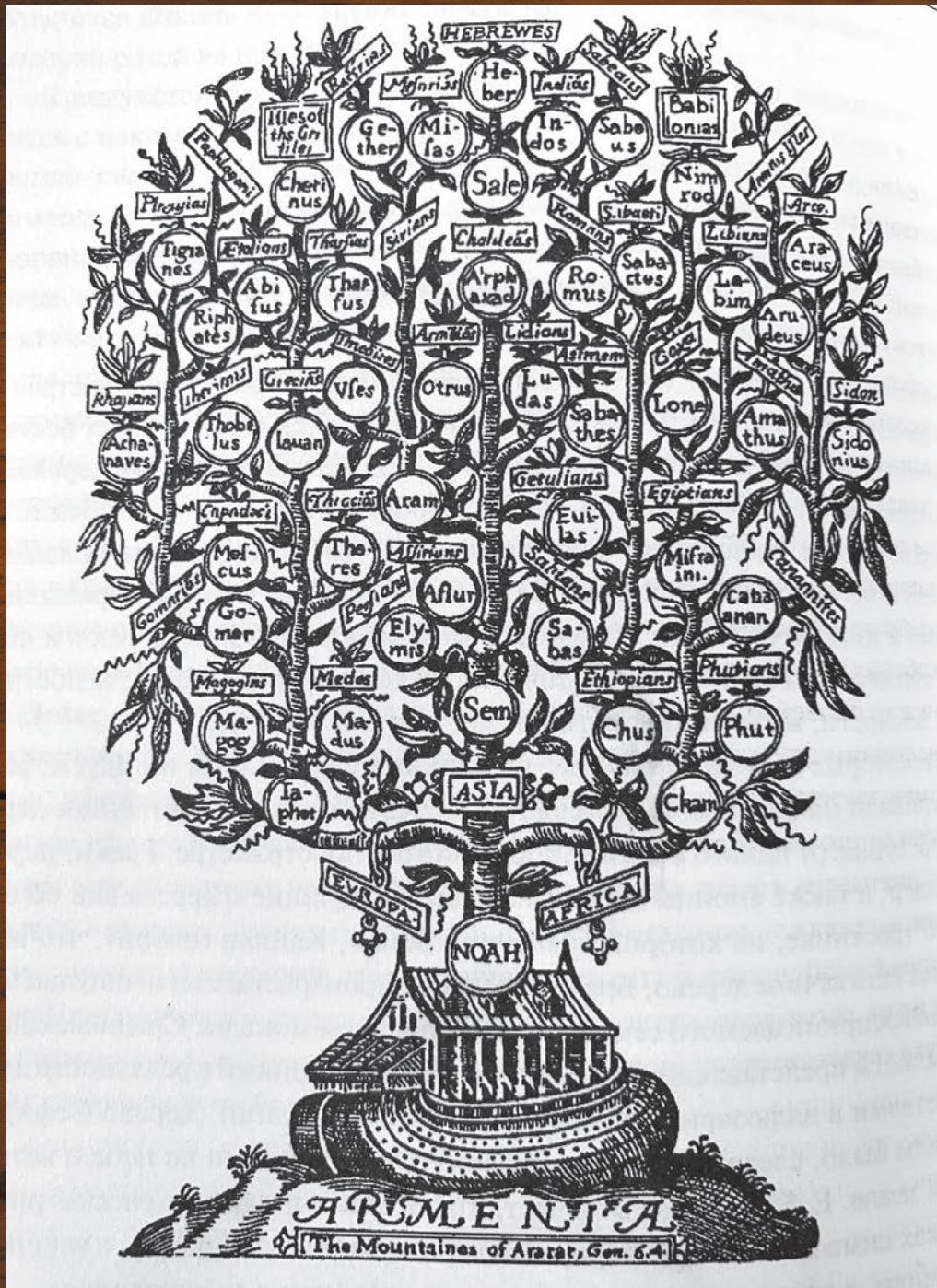
The Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."

Trials and tribulations, we will have. Together we shall alleviate the consequences, lift up the victims, instill hope, raise the glowing torch of His light high and embrace peace in Him.

Together, we shall overcome the trials and tribulations and let Armenia, the Cradle of Civilization, forever glow, for His light is everlasting.

Thank you for your support of our Mission. □

July 23, 2020



A page from the 1611 King James Bible Edition which asserts that ARMENIA is the Cradle of Civilization.



Rival powers in the region should settle their differences around a negotiating table and not the dinner tables of its peaceful and innocent population.

LEBANON A Cry for Peace and Resuscitation

By Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO

The explosion that took the lives of scores of innocent Lebanese and wounded thousands in Beirut on August 4 is beyond devastating. Whether an accident or the cunning deliberate act of evil hands and minds, the damage is beyond extensive and bearable. The resulting devastation and destruction caused is so widespread and immense that some describe it as unseen or unexperienced during the 15-year civil war.

A country severely suffering from a political, economic, financial and health crisis has now experienced violence and physical damage to life and properties. Our hearts cry for the victims of the explosion and their families. It is my hope and prayer that this does not lead to widespread violence in a country that has for ages offered the illumination of education, freedom of movement and expression, its natural beauty and the warmth of its people to the region and beyond. It is where my alma mater is. May the victims Rest in Peace and may the Holy Spirit console loved ones and families with its power which is beyond understanding.

Lebanon, now, more than ever, desperately needs two things.

1) PEACE, first and foremost.

Since its independence in the 40s, and because of the abundant vital freedoms that are alien to the region; the atmosphere of free expression, free press, free access and the beautiful natural amenities the country is blessed with and has offered, Lebanon has been the focal point and center of all clandestine and covert operations, intrigues and conspiracies plotted in the region. This small, once majority Christian nation in the heart of the Near East, lying on the shores of the Mediterranean, is tired of the rivalries and duels, strife and struggles carried out on its soil. Lebanon today, beyond its corrupt political elite, has been subjected to collective punishment through direct or indirect sanctions which have suffocated its economy, paralyzed its trade and is on its way to starve the country and its population. In a humanitarian spirit that is par with our values, it is imperative that inhumane sanctions in the region leading to and resulting in the suffering of millions be lifted immediately. ***Rival powers in the region should settle their differences around a negotiating table and not the dinner tables of its peaceful and innocent population.*** PEACE is imperative and the top priority in Lebanon and beyond.

2) REBUILDING THE NATION.

Struck with the curses of political, economic, financial plus COVID-19 ailments, Lebanon now needs all decent, loving and caring hands in the world to come to its rescue. Emergency assistance including food, provisions, medicine and shelter *that was urgently needed yesterday* are supplemented today with the simplest of needs; cover (glass or other) for the shattered structural and moral windows and doors of the country.

All destructive hands off Lebanon.

This is an appeal to all peace loving, compassionate and Christ centered hands and hearts to reach out and save Lebanon and the region beyond.

The AMAA is committed to unabashedly continue its indiscriminative emergency assistance to our communities in Lebanon injecting HOPE and revival.

Thank you for your support. □



The AMAA in Tavush

By Harout Nercessian, AMAA Representative in Armenia

The Tavush Region of Armenia, with a population of 128,609, is a beautiful, forested area, dotted with natural monuments. This Region of 2,704 sq. km (1,044 sq. miles) occupies the northeastern part of Armenia, bordering Georgia and Azerbaijan. It is an area of strategic significance for the security of the country as it shares a 300 km border with neighboring Azerbaijan, a country hostile to Armenia and intent on harming its people.

Unlike those living in large cities, the heroic Tavushites, especially those living

near the Azeri border, do not dream of careers, wealth or comfort. They dream of peace. They dream of the day when their children can freely play in the open fields and a day when underground shelters are needed no more.

Cross border firings by Azeri troops on Armenian villagers is a frequent occurrence. However, on Sunday, July 14, an Azeri-initiated military conflict involving heavy artillery and military attack drones, resulted in the death of at least 17 soldiers, five of which were Armenian. Nine Armenians, most of them soldiers, have been injured. The shelling sent the civilian population running for underground shelters.

Several border communities, including Nerkir Karmir Aghpyur (Ներքիր Կարմիր Աղբյուր), Aykebar (Այկեբար), and Chinari (Չինարի) were targeted by the Azeri forces. Property damages to the Chinari school building, the Choratan textile factory as well as several homes and vehicles have been reported. Many homes have been damaged.

Several military and civilian individuals were wounded by Azeris. One of the wounded, Aramayis Hovakimyan, a resident of Chinari, is quoted as saying, "We will not be broken, we have no place to retreat. This is our sanctuary, our village and our birthplace."

Despite their underserved and enduring hardships, the Tavushites delight and even embarrass visitors with their sincere hospitality, generosity and open hearts.

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) is committed to serving these courageous people, whose welfare is pivotal for the protection of the nation.

AMAA started its Tavush outreach in 1996 with the sponsorship of 100 children in Ijevan and bordering villages. The Tavush ministries gradually expanded into the towns of Dilijan, Berd, Noyemberyan and remote border villages such as Azatamut. The AMAA carries out its numerous services in Tavush with the help of 36 dedicated employees and nearly 100 volunteers.

With an eye on the future of Tavush, the AMAA operates numerous programs for children.



Martyred soldiers.





A Granny in Berd receives her daily meal from AMAA's Soup Kitchen.



An elderly couple in Berd thank the AMAA for their daily meal.

Currently 263 sponsored children receive regular financial assistance and medical care. In addition to attending summer camps and Christmas programs, they participate in the various educational, cultural and Christian education programs at the AMAA centers.

In partnership with Youth for Christ, the AMAA operates three after-school educational centers in Ijevan, Tilijan and Berd which provide 90 children with tutoring services, art clubs, life-skills training and daily meals.

Also, in partnership with the Evangelical Church of Armenia, the AMAA implements Christian Education programs attended by over 500 children, youth and young adults.

During Christmas, two thousand Tavushite children, including 1,000 living in remote border communities, attend special Christmas programs conveying the message of God's love and are delighted when Santa delivers gift boxes of toys, school supplies and other pleasant surprises.

Every summer, 400 Tavushite children, youth and young adults attend AMAA's Sheen Shoghig Camp at Hankavan or enjoy summer fun at Daily Vacation Bible Schools at one of the four AMAA Tavush centers. Here, they engage in daily worship services, outdoor games, arts & crafts, various group activities and tasty meals.

In response to the COVID induced economic hardships, the AMAA has distributed food packages to the families of 120 needy children.

These programs aim at helping young minds learn about, adopt and live according to the Christian faith. AMAA programs allow children to discover and develop their God-given gifts and reach their full potential as productive and God-pleasing Christians.

The **elderly** of Tavush are also cared for by the AMAA. In 2003, with AMAA support, Sister Hanna Christen of Germany opened a soup kitchen for the elderly and children of the border town of Berd. Currently, the AMAA operates this service

in partnership with the Diaconia Charitable Foundation and daily serves hot meals to 60 needy elderly.

The Adopt-a-Granny program provides 44 destitute elderly people with monthly care packages and moral-spiritual support.

AMAA expresses its caring concern for the **remote border villages** of Tavush through various programs. These heroic communities that provide the first line of defense against the hostilities of the enemy need all the support possible. The following is a partial list:

Consequent to the July 14 military attacks by Azeri forces, the AMAA immediately responded to appeals and renovated an underground shelter in the border village of Nerkin Karmeraghpyur (Ներքին Կարմերաղպյու) .

Responding to the Call to Action by the President of the Republic of Armenia; President of Hayastan All Armenian Fund's Board of Trustees, Armen Sarkissian, AMAA has supported the campaign to "Empower



A damaged home in Berd due to heavy artillery attacks.



AMAA delivers relief aid to our Church and Center in Berd.

the Remote Border Communities" with an emergency assistance of \$25,000.

In order to prevent the exodus of youth from the strategically important town of Barekamavan (Բարեկամավան), the AMAA is investing in income-generating programs.

In 2018, the AMAA initiated "One-Village" Consortium of 11 highly esteemed non-profits to join forces and invest in the development of the two Tavush border communities of Navur and Kirants. The Consortium has realized various agricultural, educational, development and infrastructural projects such as soccer field construction, running water to homes, a tractor, school labs and much more.

With funding from AMA-Australia, the AMAA renovated the playground of the Choratan Village Kindergarten.

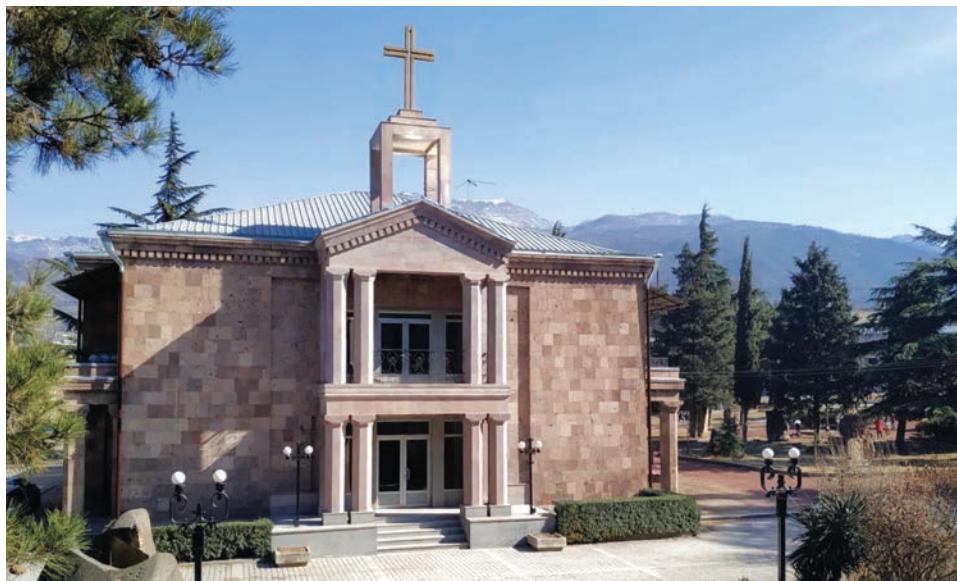
To better serve the Tavush communities, the AMAA has been investing in its facilities.

In 2015, the AMAA constructed a two-story center and church sanctuary in the town of Dilijan.

In 2019, the AMAA commenced the complete renovation of its center and church sanctuary in Ijevan. The project will be completed in 2021.

During 2020, the AMAA will construct a two-story Soup Kitchen and Educational Center in Berd. This will provide a modern dining room for the elderly and the children of the Berd Day Center.

The Armenian Missionary Association of America is committed to the welfare of the people of Armenia. In support of that mission, we shall pay special attention to those providing the first line of defense against enemy hostilities. Their security is imperative for the security of the Homeland. □



Evangelical Church of Armenia in Ijevan currently under renovation.



Evangelical Church of Armenia in Dilijan.



Children at the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Dilijan.



Just a Glimmer of Light

Lebanon's Struggle to Move Forward

Editor's Note: This article was written prior to the August 4, 2020 explosion in Beirut, Lebanon.

By Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian*

If only we could see just a glimmer of light at the end of this tunnel, the young man frankly expressed, we could hang on a bit more. One of the decreasing numbers of young people who are still employed, this youth said he had not yet given up hope for Lebanon to improve. **But with so many crises, one on top of the other, how are people supposed to live?**

The country exploded in protests in October, bringing young and old to the streets and highways. Persons of every religious community and from every region of the country joined in under a common theme: to put an end to the way the country has been governed since its founding in 1943. The governance system is based on confessional (religious) groupings, ostensibly to ensure each group's standing within Lebanese society as a whole. Yet the actual outcome has been to pit one group against another, at the expense of forging a sense of loyalty to a single, common statehood. It also proved to be fertile ground for corruption in place

of the rule of law, endemic in every level of public life in the country.

Though the protests are no longer causing the massive gatherings they were in the fall of 2019, it is not due to any sort of resolution of popular grievances. The country's economy is continuing its deterioration. The local currency is still uncontrollably losing its worth. And hopelessness is still pervasive in nearly every conversation and is the unspoken theme in many a heart.

Recently the news reported several suicides within a couple of days, all likely related to living conditions in the country. One was a 37-year-old commuter van driver from Sidon, who hanged himself. Another was a man in his 60s from the outskirts of Beirut who threw himself from his balcony, and just a few days ago yet another man attempted to kill himself by jumping from the Bourj Hammoud bridge. The most notable event was a 61-year-old man who drove from his hometown in the north all the way to Hamra, a main shopping street in

the capital. He brought a copy of his police record showing no criminal convictions, as well as a note declaring his reason for killing himself, and propped it up on a nearby tree. Crying out a lyric from a famous song by the Lebanese composer Rahbani, "I am not a blasphemer; hunger is a blasphemer," he ended his life with a pistol, in full view of passersby.

While the world rushes to find a cure for the novel coronavirus, Lebanon is suffering from a more insidious plague – that of corruption and a free-falling economy, whose most sobering expression is hunger. In a society that was for years supported by its middle class, while also relying heavily on remittances flowing in from expatriates to their families (estimated at 1/8th of the economy prior to October 2019), Lebanon has seen its middle class disappear and its tourists find other destinations. Ever increasing numbers of its population are facing food insecurity. Easily more than half of the population is living below the poverty line,

and the anecdotal evidence supporting that is sobering. In early June, Agence France Presse photojournalists knocked on doors throughout the country asking people to pose beside their open refrigerator doors; the outcome of this photo essay shocked even these seasoned journalists. One of them said that despite all the unrest he has covered throughout the world, this was by far the most heartrending assignment he had done.

Over the years, private organizations have filled the vacuum that exists in governmental social services. In fact, this latest crisis has for the most part not brought about the establishment of new relief organizations, but has pushed existing organizations to ramp up their efforts to meet the ever-increasing needs. Yet it has strained them also, as their overseas funding becomes more difficult to obtain due to numerous obstacles. Among those obstacles has been the addressing of international disputes through the tightening of regulations on the banking sector. Any funds being transferred into Lebanon are subject to many layers of scrutiny, delaying or sometimes stopping the amounts needed to do this vital humanitarian work. Great powers play out their grand agendas, but it is the common people who are most affected.

For its part, banks have largely lost the confidence of the Lebanese, in particular as the wealthy managed to transfer their money abroad when the October protests erupted and before the Lebanese pound sank. Meanwhile, the banks instituted controls



One of numerous businesses that have closed their doors due to the economic crisis.

on the average citizen's access to the funds they had saved for present and future needs. Banks have also eliminated the use of credit cards, effectively prohibiting any likelihood of travel – or emigration. This humiliation is now standard operating procedure in the many banks of Lebanon. On any morning of any day of the week one can witness people lined up, waiting for their branch to open its doors so that they can withdraw their monthly maximum limit, usually only a couple hundred dollars' worth of local currency. The government continues to claim that depositors' hard-earned money will not be appropriated as they plan financial restructuring to manage the national debt. But few, if any, believe their savings will be left untouched. It is not surprising that people are selling whatever household goods they can to be able to feed their families. Nor is it surprising that people are keeping what money they have in home safes, in cupboards and under mattresses.

But altruism also is alive among the people. A taxi driver related how a woman in the upscale Verdun area of Beirut asked him to provide the names of other drivers he knew who were out of work. She then had boxes of food staples prepared and asked this driver to distribute them along with an envelope full of cash to each unemployed driver. In another instance, a group of young women gathered as much cash as they could from their parents, then told the taxi driver, "Take us to a supermarket." Puzzled as to what they were doing, he complied, and then waited for them as they emerged from the store with hundreds of bottles of drinking water. They then had him drive to the parliament area where they distributed the bottles to soldiers of the Lebanese army standing under the hot sun, guarding government buildings. These sorts of individual initiatives exist in today's Lebanon, alongside generous benefactors and organizations, including wealthy Armenians who feel a connection to this country.

Also trapped in this unfortunate confluence of events are foreign domestic workers, generally from the southern hemisphere, who do not qualify for protection under Lebanon's labor laws. They are increasingly being abandoned by their employers who can no longer afford their services. Having received partial or no wages, they are "dumped" at the front door of their embassies without even having their passports returned to them. Mildly put, these embas-



An olive tree stands in central Beirut, close to the Parliament area, site of clashes between security forces and demonstrators.

sies are reluctant to assume the burden of responsibility for their citizens, all of whom lack the financial means to repatriate. Living on sidewalks, they are dependent on other foreign nationals and some religious and non-governmental organizations, who are mobilizing to offer what food and shelter they can. As well, citizen groups are attempting to address the greater issues through legal channels, to advocate for foreign domestic workers to have protection before Lebanese law. Students at Haigazian University two years ago organized one such advocacy group, called "Hope for Helpers." They use a variety of approaches, including social media, to raise awareness of this unjust situation and to lobby for change.

In the Bekaa Valley, which lies alongside the Syrian border just inside Lebanon, the ubiquitous presence of Syrian refugees in makeshift settlements along every major roadway are an inescapable reminder of the upheaval that has roiled the region for the past decade. This stressor has had its deleterious affect on society and infrastructure, combining with the burden of a nearly three-quarter century existence of Palestinian refugee camps throughout the country. The United Nations, various NGOs, volunteers, and others, including Christian and Muslim agencies, try their best to sustain these vulnerable people with nutritional, health, educational and social support. Yet the anticipated return of an estimated 1.5 million Syrian nationals to their Homeland



Foreign sanitation workers are demanding their pay in dollars rather than local currency, causing delays in trash collection.

has been impeded and delayed by a variety of factors, and only a few hundred thousand of them have made that move back to their country.

Meanwhile, in that same region the needs among Lebanese continue unabated. Anjar's Armenian Evangelical Boarding School, founded 73 years ago to serve the social, educational, emotional and spiritual needs of Armenian children, continues to search for avenues of service in the increasingly challenging environment of Lebanon. The Boarding Director, Nanor Akbasharian, notes that in many cases infants unable to tolerate breast milk are being fed sugar water because of the impossibly high price of baby formula. In another instance, she visited a boarding student's family living in a home devoid of furniture, as they had to sell it to be able to purchase food. Armenian families are impacted with the same intensity as any Lebanese citizen is, so the School is working with the government to enable children to return to the safety and love of the Boarding Department in Anjar. This is her prayer.

Meanwhile, she and her husband, Pastor Hagop of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Anjar, continue their outreach to board-

ing students who have been sent home to their families, with the financial support of a diverse group of donor agencies. One of the important initiatives in the past two years has been the construction of greenhouses on the School grounds. The produce and herbs grown there make it possible for the School to cut its food expenditures, while allowing students to experience pride in their own agricultural efforts. It also enables the Church to combat food insecurity as they share what they grow with residents of the village, particularly in these times of epidemic and economic uncertainty.

When a vacuum of hope exists in a society, as has been increasingly the case in Lebanon in the past decade, it is crucial for persons of vision and faith to step in and strive to fill that emptiness. The people of Lebanon, who pride themselves in their initiative and ingenuity, especially as valuable émigrés outside their native land, at home have had their dignity destroyed by a succession of world conflicts played out on their local stage, made the worse by a stream of inadequate leaders.

Social service agencies throughout the country have had no pause in their efforts to



A teacher and students gather a harvest of beans in Anjar to eat as well as to share.

redirect the tide of aimlessness and despair sweeping through the country. What Armenian agencies have been endeavoring to do with a segment of the Lebanese population is instructive in helping one see the larger picture. Pauline Sagherian, Lebanon Director of the Jinishian Memorial Program (and a council member of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Ashrafieh), describes the panic and anger that has overtaken many people who come for assistance to their medical/social center in Bourj Hammoud. Once financially able to manage their health needs, these clients are now frustrated at their inability to afford simple medications. Yet, amazingly, they ask for a minimum of help: "If we can eat a meal once a day, we will be OK."

Directing the Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Corporation in the Nor Marash section of Bourj Hammoud, Serop Ohanian describes "an explosion of needs" in the past nine months. With a mission focused on raising the health level of Armenian children, it serves not only the Armenian community, but also the surrounding neighborhood, with three satellite centers north of Beirut and in the Bekaa Valley. On any day an average of 300 people come through their doors to see medical, social, developmental and mental health specialists, compared with an average of 80 a day at the outset of the Syrian crisis eight years ago, and 20 per day a decade ago. Mr. Ohanian noted that the scope of needs is widening and deepening, exacerbating difficulties within every demographic, with a rise in school dropouts,



Syrian refugee camps appear in farmlands along highways throughout Lebanon's Bekaa Valley.



Children receive health checkups in Armenian schools in Lebanon.



Jinishian Center, along with other social service agencies, offers the community medicines at a fraction of the cost.

couples separating, domestic violence, brain- and talent-drain, and a growth in the number of elderly whose families live at a physical or emotional distance.

One of the agencies ameliorating the physical and emotional distance between families and their elders is the Armenian Elderly Home, known as "CAHL," a cooperative ministry of the Armenian Apostolic and Evangelical churches, also located in Bourj Hammoud. Its director, Sebouh Terzian, a licensed Armenian Evangelical preacher, recalls the strict hygienic measures they put in place from the moment the epidemic was first detected in Lebanon. The plan worked; until now they have not had any infections. Families wishing to see their elders can visit in a large meeting room, the visitor at one end and the elder at the other, with a CAHL worker present to, among other things, repeat to the resident what is being said from across the room. "Although we have been

compelled to put our development plans for CAHL on hold, we are glad to have been able to maintain the same level of care of our residents as before, along with providing the emotional support that families once were able to give when they could kiss, touch and chat with their loved ones."

The aforementioned agencies are all cooperative entities with the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE), whose outreach work also includes its own social service agency, called the Social Action Committee (SAC). With SAC Director Lena Danaoglian and Social Worker Talin Mardirossian, the Committee has been hard at work, in particular strategizing the distribution of food assistance that is so crucial to offer in these times. As many other groups are doing, the SAC prepared parcels for the increased number of families in need, with funding from the Armenian Missionary Association

of America (AMAA). They paid careful attention to the contents, even if it meant having to travel from store to store, rather than including whatever was easiest to obtain. When recipients saw what had been given them, the impact of these simple gifts was overwhelming: "I was going to buy tomato sauce, but when I saw the prices at the store I left without buying it. When I opened your parcel and saw you had included tomato sauce I jumped for joy!" Or this: "My elderly mother asked me to get her favorite cheese from the store, but I couldn't afford it. Then I opened your box and found the exact cheese she had asked for, and I sat and cried." Another recipient came to the office to profusely thank the SAC and said, "I was despairing to think of how I would wash my clothes without any detergent, and there you had included it!"

Preparing these parcels for distribution brought together Christian Endeavor



Caregivers at the Armenian Elderly Home surround residents with warmth, even in the absence of family visits.



The UN has placed public sanitizing stations throughout the capital, including Bourj Hammoud.



Church youth gathering to assemble food packets for distribution to vulnerable families.

("Chanits") youth from various UAECNE churches to make tangible their motto, "For Christ and the Church." Not only did they help with the delivery, but in many cases they were also able to pray with the recipients. Yet the situation in this underprivileged area of Greater Beirut remains dire, and school-aged children are the greatest concern. Parents do not always realize the necessity of a healthy intellectual environment, as well as proper nutrition, for

their children to flourish. Whereas before the children would gather at the Center for after-school study help, Mrs. Danaoghlian described how they retooled their after-school program to be able to reach the participants via their parents' cell phones, so they would not fall behind in their studies. Sadly, they were often met with parents unwilling to part with their phones for an hour or two, even for the sake of their own children's education.



The aftermath of the October protests in central Beirut next to St. George Church and Al-Amine Mosque.

In light of all of this, despite the challenging reality of the country in these days, all of those interviewed pointed to the sustaining power of God's presence enabling them to carry on. Mrs. Danaoghlian said, "I live with hope, first of all hope in God. It seems illogical to some, but I know that this situation will not continue forever. Therefore, I have hope."

Pastor Sebouh Terzian reflected, "Knowing that I am here to serve others, and that my efforts are helping to sustain an entire institution, with over 200 residents and employees, God has put me here for a time such as this." Mr. Ohanian expresses his conviction thus: "My desire is to be a faithful and wise steward. I cannot do any of this on my own. I need the filling of the Holy Spirit, to be able to hear God's gentle whisper. And in all of this my goal is what I inherited from my predecessor, Rev. Robert Sarkessian: 'faith in action.'" Finally, Pauline Sagherian observed, "Seeing God's hand in all these difficulties, as well as seeing staff and clients drawing on God for strength, sustains me. God is aware of our situation, and I bring to mind that Jesus also came in the midst of human difficulties, in order to serve and to save."

As Lebanon faces each new challenge, it is worth considering how those communities who had faced the ravages of the First World War and the oppressive persecution of the Ottomans were able with God's help to struggle to their feet and build or rebuild their lives. Again, the Armenian community is a powerful case in point, having been welcomed as refugees to the lands of the Middle East, especially Lebanon and Syria. And although often in rags with no resources, they were granted citizenship in these newly formed countries, going on to create churches, rebuild neighborhoods, found schools and institutions, and secure livelihoods for the good of all.

Though today's circumstances are different, the secret to the Armenian people's endurance and flourishing is the same: to have a vision for the future and a calling to serve others. Trusting in God to provide the necessary glimmer of light, and relying on prayers to the Lord who moves the hearts of many to "give as they have received" (Matthew 10:8), Lebanon will find the necessary strength and resilience to emerge from this dark tunnel into more hopeful days. □

* Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian is the Coordinator of Church Relations of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East.



SYRIA Torn Between War and Love of Life

By Maria Kaprielian*

If we recall the events of the war in Syria and the devastation over the past nine years, the events of each day of the crisis, the recorded occurrences and the crimes perpetrator, we have to ask ourselves how people can survive in such conditions. How can they live their normal daily lives, how could they not back down and give up? The events were so bad that the mere mention of them unwillingly recalls them.

December 22, 2016 was a turning point for the Armenians of Aleppo when the city liberated from armed terrorist groups. The days full of horror ended that day and a new life began.

Gradually, rehabilitation work began and hopes for improvement were noticed.

However, the triumph on the political-security ground did not last long. The economic war began inflicting heavy blows on the citizens with the same intensity.

The last blow was in December 2019, when the United States Senate approved the

Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act, better known as the "Caesar" Act, and it was implemented on June 17, 2020. The Act imposes sanctions on all those who provide technical or financial assistance to high-ranking Syrian government officials or government politicians. The financial assistance mentioned in the law includes the provision of loans and export loans. As for petrol and power sources, the law inflicts fines for all those who provide or support various services in Syria, such as technology, information or other areas, and contribute to the expansion of domestic natural gas production. Reconstruction plans are also included in the Act, and the law prohibits foreigners from concluding reconstruction contracts.

The consequences of implementing this Act had a terrible impact on citizens: the increase in tariffs has already gone beyond logic, inflation has become unbearable, the fall of the Syrian pound has reached low levels against the US dollar and there has been a drug crisis because drug factories have had

difficulty obtaining appropriate materials. Providing the daily bread has become the main task of the father of the family.

Since March 13, 2020, the threat posed by COVID-19 has also created many difficulties and aggravated an already difficult situation.

For over a month and a half, all gathering places such as schools, churches, restaurants, clubs, and gyms have been closed by State decision. This situation, in addition to the already difficult economic situation, made everyday life even more terrible, because people's daily lives suffered.

In terms of security, the situation is much better now, compared to the years 2012-2017. After the liberation of Aleppo, there were only a few incidents that violated the security of the region, when rockets landed in different places. But little by little the situation became more stable and today there are almost no safety problems.

Rehabilitation work began in 2017 within the Syrian-Armenian community and continues to this day. In the Aleppo Armenian community, the buildings damaged by the war were repaired, including churches, schools and clubs such as the renovation of the Armenian Evangelical Holy Trinity Church of Kessab, Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church, Armenian Apostolic Mother Church of the Forty Martyrs, Armenian Pity Mother Church (St. Rita), National Karen Yeppe College, the five Armenian Evangelical schools in Aleppo and Kessab (Bethel, Emmanuel, Syriac, Aleppo College and Martyr's School of Kessab), and others.

Today, the Aleppo Armenian community is active. Even during the most brutal days of the war, church, educational, cultural, sports, youth and charitable activities did not cease, and sometimes continued with even greater vigor.



PRASHANT RAJ/AFP/Getty Images

Syrians in Aleppo run after a truck to get their daily bread as bakeries are closed and bread is sold through local distributors to stop long lines in front of bakeries and stop the spread of COVID-19.



Clothing is distributed to the students of Bethel School.



Rev. Haroutune Selimian visits the Old Age Home of Aleppo.

In the cultural field, many Armenians continued to write and compose articles about the unfavorable conditions. The only Armenian newspaper in Syria "Kantsasar" continued to publish poetic, historical and spiritual articles. Books were published by Lala Misgarians, Levon Sharoyans, Mariana Berti-zlian, Houry Azizins, Hagop Dldlians, Rev. Haroutune Salimian and Hagop Cholakian. In 2016, the Armenian language book-album, dedicated to the 90 years of the Armenian Evangelical Bethel School in Aleppo (1923-2013) and edited by Hagop Cholakian, was published in memory of the Armenian Genocide Centennial.

In the field of education, the Armenian daily schools remained open. Sunday schools, summer schools and art schools, such as the Armenian Evangelical "Armiss" Conservatory and Parsegh Ganachian of Hamazkayin and Aram Khachaturian Music Schools of AGBU also continued their activities. During these conditions, the Armenian language courses continued to be taught in the Higher Institute of Languages of Aleppo State University.

Looking at these different segments, one can form a general idea of the current mood of the Armenians, which is basically identical to the mood of all citizens throughout the country. For example, most teenagers are dissatisfied with their situation because they think boys and girls their age from other countries live in much better conditions, especially in terms of realizing their dreams for the future, and being interested in their daily activities. The war in Aleppo destroyed their places of employment, such as malls which became pleasant places for teenagers to work and shop. The teenagers complain that they already spent their childhood years under the torrent of rockets and explosives, and now they are not enjoying their youth because there are few places to go or they are too expensive. The danger of COVID-19 has further obscured their vision.

The situation for Armenian young people is not much different from that of teenagers. Most youth aim to settle in Armenia, especially since they have friends in Armenia and see their photos on social media. The mood of despair is mostly with

the young people; they are lost. What should they do? How should they think? Where should they go? Where will they find their lost future? Young people, being a little more mature than teenagers, know that living in Armenia or getting an education there is not an easy task. Living in Armenia is quite expensive, and it will be difficult to work and study at the same time. However, they do not want to live like their childhood, so a terrible state of uncertainty reigns over them.

Older people, being more cautious, are somewhat convinced that it is not possible to leave Syria during these current conditions. They have gotten used to the situation and they continue their lives.

The general phenomenon of migration, although alleviated, is still present. Some families, who have lost all means of livelihood and do not have the opportunity to start over, are planning to emigrate.

In any case, the number of needy families has greatly increased. Most of the families living in relatively good conditions during the pre-war period have become more supportive.



Armenian Evangelical School of Kessab.



Aleppo College for Girls.



Polyclinic of the Armenian Evangelical Bethel Church of Aleppo.



A New School Year opens at the Armenian Evangelical Bethel School.

Despite all this, life continues in Syria, with schools and universities, churches and municipalities continuing to provide services which benefit the people. The three communities of Aleppo did not spare any means to help children in their community. They also cooperate with various charities in Aleppo and provide assistance to the people. Among the main contributing parties are the Armenian Apostolic, Armenian Catholic, Armenian Evangelical communities, the AGBU, the Syrian-Armenian Relief Cross, the Jinishian Memorial Program, Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Corporation, The Syrian-Armenian Committee for Urgent Relief and Rehabilitation (SACUR), as well as various international organizations such as CARITAS.

Among the humanitarian assistance provided is financial assistance for the disabled and widows, health care packages, food parcels, electricity supply (Amper), fuel, medical assistance for the elderly and vulnerable, scholarship aid for Armenian students,



Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church of Aleppo.

teacher support programs, family allowances, financial aid for the needy families of Aleppo and aid for Armenian University students in Aleppo, Damascus and Kessab.

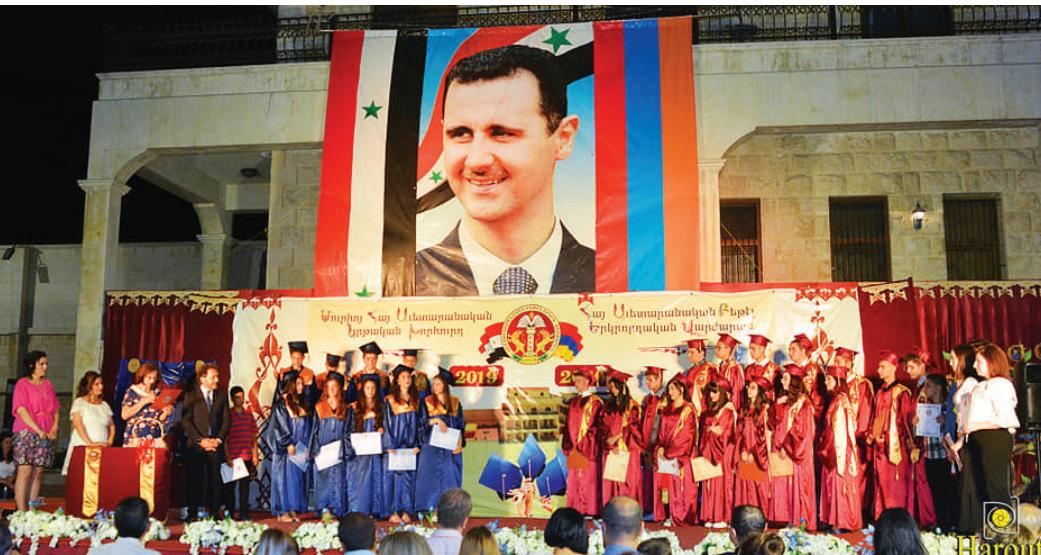
During the war years, the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) contributed to the Armenian Community in Syria at large through

these relief, humanitarian, educational and health programs. The AMAA also provided spiritual support for the ministries of Sunday schools, women's Auxiliaries, and junior and youth groups of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in Syria.

Despite all this support and assistance, it has still been impossible to meet all the needs of the people, because the unnatural inflation in the country and the incompatibility of wages does not satisfy these needs.

The country is now preparing for parliamentary elections. Aleppo Armenian communities, organizations and unions unanimously support the election of one candidate.

In the Armenian Diaspora and in the Middle East it is necessary for the Syrian-Armenian community, in general, and for the Aleppo-Armenian community, in particular, to take ownership of the training of human resources, the preservation and development of the Western Armenian language and the neighborhood lands of Western Armenian occupied territories. □



Armenian Evangelical Bethel High School Graduation on August 2, 2020.

* Attorney Maria Kaprielian is a journalist and news commentator in Syria.

AMAA President Dr. Nazareth Darakjian's letter of appreciation to the AMAA Staff and Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian.



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July 18, 2020

Dear AMAA staff members and Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director/CEO

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the AMAA I would like to express our gratitude to all of you for the care and dedication that you demonstrated towards the organization during the lockdown that was necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic. We very much appreciate the fact you were able to carry on the essential work of the organization either by working from home using your computers or by individually going to the office to pick up or deliver whatever was necessary. It was very encouraging to see how quickly you adapted to the new conditions that were imposed on us all and kept the workflow going without interruption. A special thank you also to the Executive Director/CEO for his leadership in this time of crisis and for maintaining very close contact with the office while being stranded on the West Coast.

At the last meeting of the AMAA Board which took place on July 18, 2020, a resolution was passed unanimously to that effect.

Nazareth E. Darakjian, M.D., AMAA President
President, AMAA

"GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO ALL CREATION." MARK 16:15
«Գաղցի ամբող աշխարհ, ո քըրողիք սեւարան ողյու պարագներն» Մարկու. 16. 15

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Jesus Christ: The Face of the Father's Mercy

By Rev. Michel Aghamalian, Ph.D.*

What is the face of the Father like? Or "Who is the face of the Father?" Pope Francis himself gives an utterly meaningful and deep answer: "Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy. Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth, reaching its culmination in Him."

Colossians 1:15 says, "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation." (ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ). The word for "image" in Greek is **εἰκὼν** (eikon), which means, "to look like" or "likeness," a representation.

Objectively, when we look at Jesus, we see God. Karl Rahner, the prominent Catholic theologian of the 20th century says, "Jesus is the human face of God."

Our human mind functions in a certain way to understand things not known to us previously. It works through analogies. To reach to a knowledge of God, we might ask, "What kind of a man would God have been?" The New Testament clearly answers this question. God would have been a "complete man," Who is none other than Jesus Himself. (Ephesians 4:13).

The root of the word "compassion" in Latin means "to suffer together," share the passion, feel the other's pain within oneself, or in psychological terms "identification," which aims at relieving or saving someone from his pain - a saving sympathy.

This same truth is found in the incarnation of Jesus Christ Himself. In Hebrews 4:15 it says: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin."

Hence, based on the teachings of the New Testament, great church fathers related the incarnation to salvation. Through incarnation, God in Christ took upon Himself our humanity, sharing with us in all our human experiences, not least our pain and sufferings, so that we are able to partake in divine life.

The famous Swiss theologian, Karl Barth's favorite painting was Matthias Grünewald's crucifixion, in which John the Baptist holding an open Bible with his unusually long finger points toward Christ. For Barth, this was an excellent illustration of his view of the Bible as a witness to the living Word of God. To see Jesus, we should prayerfully gaze at Him, watch Him acting and teaching in the Gospels.

Mark 6:34 says: "When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So, He began teaching them many things."

First, Jesus was mourning the death of John the Baptist and wished to spend some time alone. However, when He saw the crowd, "He had compassion for them." This is a compassion based on self-giving, self-sacrificing, seeking the good of "the other;" reaching toward those in need and pain. Jesus did exactly the same here. Leaving His own concerns aside, He reached toward those waiting for Him at the hill foot. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the renowned German theologian, who was executed on the charge of plotting against Hitler, shortly before the German surrender, called Jesus "the man for others."

Second, "He had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd." Even though spiritual leaders in the time of Jesus were considered shepherds of people, Psalm 23 and similar passages denoted that the one ultimately good shepherd, the compassionate one, was God and He alone. Hence, in the Old Testament usage, "shepherd" in the strict sense of the word was most appropriately a metaphor of God. Jesus took upon Himself the role of the good shepherd teaching people in "a deserted place" (6:35), away from the hustle and bustle of daily life. The revealed divine presence and truth in the very person of Jesus would often bring about a comforting and life-changing experience for those who came in contact with Him and His teachings. The incarnated love and mercy of God met people in their deepest needs and afflictions.

Third, Jesus not only taught the crowds, but when it grew late and they could not get food for themselves, He fed them by blessing five loaves of bread and two fishes. New Testament scholars tell us that this was also a fulfillment of messianic banquet.

The compassion of God is truly manifested, when the needs of the poor are taken care of and the hungry are fed. Jacob, Peter and John reminded Paul as he was getting ready to embark on his journeys to spread the Word, that he should never forget the poor (Galatians 2:10).

Fourth, In order to feed the big crowd, Jesus blessed the loaves, broke them, and asked the disciples to set them before the people (6:41). The Evangelist concludes by saying, "and all ate and were filled" (6:42). God's mercy in Jesus, reaches toward men to fill and satisfy



their whole being. Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

We will be completely satisfied when we are in a right relationship with God. God's mercy reaches us, first, to restore us to a living, intimate relationship with Himself.

In feeding the big crowd, Jesus blessed and broke the bread, but in order to feed them spiritually, another bread had to be broken: Jesus himself, the Bread of Life!

In John 6:35, Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life." On the cross, this very bread was broken. The way that the cross opened toward God, made it possible for men to enter in a new spiritually satisfying relationship with God.

The Father's mercy manifested in the life and death of Christ made Him become one with us in our death, so that we could share the very life that belongs to Him, in Him and through His Spirit.

We do see God in Jesus when we look at Him, but who do people see when they look at us and our churches?

If Jesus, the incarnation of God's mercy, became like one of us, we too, by walking in His steps, can become vessels through which God channels His love and mercy toward people.

When and where the Church has been faithful to the way of her merciful Lord, she was able to make significant differences in the lives of people – helping the poor, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, building schools, helping the afflicted and destitute, helping the refugees, working for justice, and walking the difficult path of forgiveness and reconciliation.

As we equip ourselves with mercy, ponder on its supreme manifestation in Jesus and by the help of the Holy Spirit get prayerfully shaped and devotedly reshaped into the likeness of the compassionate heart of the Lord, we will have churches characterized by tolerance, understanding, peace, caring for the needy and vulnerable people, and showing genuine love to everybody regardless of their differences with us. These good and precious traits will have a tendency to spill over onto much bigger circles bringing glory to the merciful Father in heaven. As Jesus said: "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" Matthew 5:16. □

**Rev. Dr. Michel Aghamalian is a Senior Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Iran.*

AMAA NEAR EAST COMMITTEE AND UAECNE ANNUAL MEETING



The Annual Meeting of the AMAA's Near East Committee and Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE) was held via a Zoom video conference on Thursday, June 4, 2020. The meeting lasted four hours and included discussions and reviews of the situations in Lebanon, Syria and in the rest of the Near East. In addition, matters of Security and Health, Education and the socio-economic status of our Near East communities and matters of financial concerns as well as the 2020-21 Budgets were also on the agenda.

Although nothing beats spirited personal and physical visits, this video conference was the next best thing. We pray to God for the welfare of our communities and break barriers to support and sustain our institutions and ministries around the globe.

HAIGAZIAN UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEET VIA ZOOM



On Wednesday, June 3, 2020, the Haigazian University Board of Trustees concluded a successful three-day virtual meeting of participants from California, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Beirut. This year, despite the Coronavirus Pandemic, the AMAA and the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE) along with Haigazian University appropriately and deservedly will celebrate the 65th Anniversary of the School. The AMAA is committed to continue its major support to Haigazian for the benefit of the future of our younger generation.

Founded in 1955 under the auspices of the AMAA and UAECNE, and notably the only Armenian University outside

Armenia, Haigazian University, with a motto of Truth, Freedom, Service, serves Lebanon and the region by empowering valuable human resources as a beacon of learning for a diverse community, and for a better life and service.



The Treaty of Sèvres

A Historic Event

By Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, Armenian Evangelical World Council Executive Director

August 10 is a memorable anniversary of a historic event. On that day in 1920, the victorious Allied Powers of World War I and the defeated Turkey signed an important treaty—the Treaty of Sèvres. It was in the city of Sèvres, near Paris, France that the Allied Powers and their minor allies agreed to settle their conflicts with the Ottoman Empire, to redraw the map and extend the formal recognition to the newborn states of the Middle East and the Caucasus. One of the signatories of the Treaty of Sèvres was the Republic of Armenia, which had declared its independence on May 28, 1918.

On January 18, 1919, the Allies held the Paris Peace Conference at Versailles, France to sign a treaty with the defeated Central Powers. Armenians attended the Paris Peace Conference in February 1919. There were two delegations—the delegation of the Republic of Armenia, headed by Avedis Aharonian, and the Armenian National Delegation, headed by Boghos Nubar Pasha. Later, they agreed to unite as the All Armenian Delegation. They presented their memorandum to the Peace Conference. Their proposed State included the six provinces of Turkish Armenia—Van, Bitlis, Diarbekir, Kharpert, Sivaz, Erzerum, the province of Trabzon, Mountainous Karabagh, Zangezur and four districts of Cilician Armenia. To protect the integrity of the new State, the Armenian Delegation urged the Allied Powers to place Armenia under a protectorate of an Allied Power.

The Allied Powers were aware of the fact that to make a treaty effective in the case of Armenia it involved military and financial responsibilities. Prime Minister Lloyd George of Great Britain perceived the United States to be the nation to assume that responsibility. Thus, the Supreme Council of

the Allied Powers asked the United States to accept the mandate for Armenia.

In the United States the public opinion was already very favorable to help Armenia. Religious and civic leaders, the missionaries, and Near East Relief workers asked both the Congress and President Woodrow Wilson to assume mandatory powers over the entire region and send troops to protect Armenia.

Upon his return home from the Paris Conference, President Wilson presented the proposal of an American mandate over Armenia to the Senate. The Senate rejected the proposal; however, in the United States there was a great sympathy to help the Armenians. President Wilson was determined to continue his support to the Armenian Republic both morally and financially.

As the United States Senate was debating the issue of an American mandate over Armenia, the French were preparing to occupy Armenian Cilicia to consolidate their hold in the Middle East. To populate the region with non-Turkish elements, the French government arranged that the Armenian refugees could repatriate to Cilicia and resettle in their communities. As a result, around 150,000 new Armenian refugees settled in their Homeland from which they were forced to leave during the Armenian deportations and the Genocide. The French army ordered the Turks to turn over the Armenian homes and properties to their rightful owners. The Turks resented this unexpected Armenian presence in their midst.

On another front, the Allied Powers encouraged the Greeks to occupy Smyrna, which became another irritant to the Turks. The dissection of their country began to incite the Turkish people to fight and preserve the Turkish fatherland. Two Turkish

military leaders, Kiazim Karabekir and Mustafa Kemal, led a revolutionary movement with a slogan "Turkey for Turks." Eventually, Kemal emerged as the charismatic leader, who started terrorist activities in the interior of Turkey challenging the Allied Powers.

In January 1920, Mustafa Kemal embarked upon a guerilla attack against the French and the Armenians to chase them out of Cilicia and Anatolia. He achieved his objectives partially by freeing Cilicia from non-Turkish occupation. He mobilized his forces in the east and attacked the Armenian towns in Nakhichevan.

In February 1920, the European powers began the discussion of a peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire in San Remo, Italy. In April, they agreed to give the Republic of Armenia the provinces of Van, Arzerum, and Bitlis and an outlet to the Black Sea. They also asked President Wilson to draw the final borders of Armenia, within the guidelines agreed in San Remo.

On August 10, 1920, the Turks signed a treaty with the Allied Powers in the French city of Sèvres which is known as the Treaty of Sèvres. It consisted of 110 large pages, 13 chapters and 433 articles. There were six articles in the Treaty (88-93) that related to Armenia. In them, it demanded Turkey to recognize Armenia as a free and independent State (88); the signatories agreed to let the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, to determine the boundary between Turkey and Armenia, which will pass through the provinces of



Erzirum, Trabizond, Van and Bitlis, and prescribe an outlet for Armenia to the Black Sea (89). Turkey renounced any claim to the ceded land. Articles 91-93 referred to the establishment of a boundary commission; to accept obligation in the repatriation and restoration of the Armenian survivors; the prosecution of the perpetrators of the Armenian massacres; and the protection of non-Armenian citizens within Armenia.

On November 22, 1920, President Wilson announced that he had drawn the map of Armenia under the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres. "Wilsonian Armenia" awarded the Armenian nation a territory that encompassed approximately 155,000 square kilometers. It included vast areas of historic Armenia, with the exclusion of the southernmost and westernmost sectors. A viable, united Armenian State had been created, on paper. Unfortunately, however, Wilson's decision was relayed too late

to the Allied Nations in Europe as the Republic of Armenia was waging a losing struggle to preserve its existence. By mid-November 1920, the Turks had recaptured the entire region they had controlled prior to their withdrawal in November 1918. The Kemalist movement made alliance with the Bolshevik government of Russia. To show their total rejection of the Treaty of Sèvres, the Turks attacked Armenia with a massive force advancing toward Yerevan. The Armenian leaders were now forced with two problems: one was the Turkish threat to annihilate the Armenians, and the other was the Bolshevik attempt to take over. On December 2, 1920, the leaders of Armenia, transferred the reign of government to the Bolsheviks, and the State of Armenia became part of the Soviet Empire.

Mustafa Kemal continued to strengthen his military and political posture and obtained enormous supplies from the

Bolsheviks and the Allies. In October 1922, he toppled the 35th Sultan Mehmed the 6th, ended the Ottoman Empire and established a Turkish Republic.

On July 24, 1923, the Allies signed the Treaty of Lausanne. The defeated Turkey imposed its own terms on the victorious Allies. The bright expectation of the Republic of Armenia that had emanated from the Treaty of Sèvres faded into bitter disillusion.

Undoubtedly, the Treaty of Sèvres was an international binding document. The Allied Powers had made a commitment to accept President Wilson's Award as the final settlement. But unfortunately, they did not honor their pledge to their little ally, Armenia.

Should the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres concerning the Republic of Armenia be revisited? That question continues to be debated. □



AMAA Awards Scholarships to 85 Needy and Deserving Students

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) awarded \$221,300 in direct scholarship grants to 85 worthy students for the academic year 2020-2021 attending colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. In addition, \$32,000 more was assigned for qualified university students in Armenia.

For over 50 years, the AMAA has helped thousands of college students with scholarships, thus helping them prepare for the future and relieving the financial burden that makes it harder to focus on their work. Moreover, since its founding, AMAA has supported the education of tens of thousands of Armenian students at all levels, in the Near East, Europe, Continental US and Armenia. The AMAA also provides generous and abundant financial aid to schools and institutions of higher education in the Near East, including Haigazian University and the Near East School of Theology in Beirut.

The scholarships granted this year were provided from several AMAA scholarship funds established over the years to help students in need. Students may request applications from AMAA headquarters in Paramus, NJ beginning in January of each year. The deadline to submit applications for the 2021-2022 academic year is May 1, 2021. □



Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church Fresno, CA

Daily Vacation Bible School

The first group of pioneer Armenians, 40 in number, arrived in Fresno, CA on September 10, 1883. Among those 40 were a few who would later become the founders of the Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church.

Since most had attended Congregational churches in Armenia, they began worshipping in the First Congregational Church in Fresno, despite their lack of knowledge of the English language. Though they participated wholeheartedly in all functions of church life, the differences in cultural background and the language barrier created conflict among the members and the group were obligated to leave the Church.

Some of them joined to form the Armenian Presbyterian Church. Others joined no church and waited for the day when Fresno could have an Armenian Congregational Church. They did not wait long. In 1901, the Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church became a reality under the leadership of physician and lay pastor Dr. Nazareth Alexanderian. Dr. Alexanderian served without remuneration for a year and a half.

After his resignation, the Church was unable to hold services until 1903, when Rev. Hovhannes Santikian became the first resident minister. Under his leadership, the membership quickly grew and met in public halls. It became apparent that a permanent location was needed to accommodate the worshippers. In 1911, under the leadership of Rev. Arpiar Vartanian, Pilgrim Church purchased the church and parsonage of the First Congregational Church located at Van Ness and Inyo Streets. Ironically, this, the first permanent church site, was the very building they were forced to leave 27 years earlier.

In 1914, came the horrors of World War I, which shook the world. The Armenians were uprooted from their Homeland and experienced the first Genocide of the 20th Century. Many survivors found their way to Fresno. Due to the new immigrants, Pilgrim Church experienced unusual growth. During the ministry of Rev. M. G. Papazian, Pilgrim Church purchased the First Presbyterian Church on "M" and Merced Streets in downtown Fresno in 1921 to accommodate the growing congregation. That church and parsonage location served the congregation for forty years.

After Rev. Papazian retired in 1940, Rev. H. A. Chakmakjian served from 1941-50. During those difficult war years, 198 men and women of the church served in the U.S. armed forces. Nine made the ultimate sacrifice for the defense of our country.



In July 1953, Rev. Harry M. Missirlian arrived to assume the leadership of Pilgrim Church. The Church was now growing, and the Baby Boom caused a substantial increase in the number of children at the Church. Beautiful as it was, the current church building lacked the space and modern amenities to adequately serve the growing congregation.

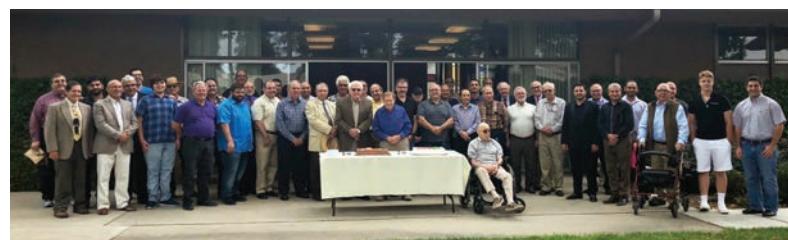
Farsighted members, recognizing the need for a new church location away from the downtown area, spearheaded the move to buy land in the northern part of the rapidly growing city. Pilgrim Church was able to purchase eight and a half acres of land just south of Dakota on First Street. Fundraising for the new church began and the entire congregation – from the youngest, who saved coins in church-shaped piggy banks, to the oldest – gave generously to make the new church a reality.

Richard Manoogian, who grew up in the Church, was chosen as the architect. Manoogian's desire was to create a design that incorporated everything a minister felt needed to be part of church life.

On October 11, 1959, the groundbreaking ceremony took place on the site of the new church with much rejoicing. Construction began in the fall of 1960 and cornerstone laying ceremonies took place on December 4, 1960. The first service was held at the new location on June 16, 1961, in the social hall, which served as the temporary sanctuary.

Ten years later after the groundbreaking ceremony, the construction of the sanctuary was started. Manoogian designed the sanctuary using contemporary materials but also incorporating Armenian architecture in its design to reflect the culture of the worshippers.

The blending of culture and faith was also reflected in the free-flowing pattern of the stained-glass windows illustrating the life of Christ on the north



Father's Day.



Women's prayer.

windows and the history of the Armenian people on the south windows. Two other stained-glass windows salvaged from the M Street church were now in the narthex of the new sanctuary.

No detail was too small for Mr. Manoogian. The design of the acoustics was carefully coordinated with the pipe organ design to obtain the maximum reverberation time compatible with excellent hearing quality for the Word of God.

On March 15, 1970, the beautiful sanctuary was completed and dedicated with a joyful service. Also, in 1970, the Church realized that its youth program needed a full-time director. Karl Avakian, then a high school teacher and seminary student, but later a pastor and still later the Minister to the Union for the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, became the first Youth Director.

From the time Pilgrim Church first began to occupy the First Street location, an electronic organ was used. The Church dedicated a new pipe organ for the sanctuary on January 31, 1971, a few days after the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Church. Donations from 1956 to January 1971, in memory of two hundred and forty-two parishioners, paid for the organ.

Rev. Missirlian retired in 1980 to become the first Minister to the Union of the AEUNA and received the title of Pastor Emeritus. Rev. Roger Minassian succeeded him and under his leadership, the Church took two giant steps forward. First, the Church hired its first full-time Assistant Pastor, Rev. Calvin Sagherian, who created a thriving young couples' group, while also leading college and high school groups.

Also, during Rev. Minassian's tenure, Harry and Zabelle Goorabian, longtime members of the Church, made an extremely generous gift to allow the building and operation of a Family Life Center. The Goorabian Family Life Center, consisting of a first-class basketball court, weight room, a kitchen and meeting rooms, has had a large influence on Fresno. One meeting room housed a coffee house and live music venue operated under the name "Kuppajoe," and several young people who otherwise probably would not have graced a church came to know Jesus Christ and accept Him as their Lord and Savior there. At one time, the *Fresno Bee* named Kuppajoe one of the three best places in Fresno to hear live music of any kind – not just church music.

In 1993, Rev. Minassian resigned to form an organization called Hope Now for Youth, which helped convert over a thousand former gang members to job holders through the power of Jesus Christ. Many Pilgrim parishioners have served in various capacities with Hope Now and were particularly important during its early years.

In 1995, Rev. Dr. Bruce Baloian succeeded Rev. Minassian. He brought a wealth of teaching excellence with him and many remember his dynamic and enlightening Bible studies and powerful sermons. In 1997, he resigned to return to Azusa Pacific University where he had been a professor of Old Testament.

Rev. Ara Guekguezian began his ministry at Pilgrim Church in September of 2000 and presided over the Church's 100th anniversary in January 2001. During Rev. Guekguezian's ministry, Pilgrim increased its missionary outreach. The Church adopted a sister church in Gyumri, Armenia, sending monetary aid and, under Rev. Guekguezian's leadership, teams of people from Fresno traveled to Armenia. His fifteen plus years of service brought a much-needed continuity of pastoral leadership. He was also instrumental in bringing Rev. Kevin Kasper to Pilgrim to serve as Associate Pastor.

After Rev. Guekguezian's resignation in 2015, the Church commenced a search and was blessed to welcome Rev. Nerses Balabanian as Senior Pastor in October of 2017. Under his leadership, the Church was able to increase the use of the Armenian language in the worship service while simultaneously maintaining a powerful English ministry. He and his wife,



Family Retreat.



Choir and Orchestra.



Sunday morning Worship Service.

Sevan, have also shared their considerable musical talents to ensure Sunday worship remains vibrant and glorifying to God.

As a member of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA), it's worth noting PACC is active in the life of the AEUNA, and many of its parishioners and ministry staff have served as Board members, Board moderators and ministers to the Union.

Although the recent COVID-19 outbreak has forced the Church to suspend gathering for worship and instruction on our campus, our pastoral team and lay volunteers have maintained a virtual worship service every Sunday, as well as prayer and praise via Zoom on alternate Wednesday evenings, and various Bible studies. These efforts have led to reaching people around the country in a way that could not be done otherwise.

While we wait to meet again in person, we trust in God's providence and His love that He has shown us in the 119 years of our existence. We prayerfully and gratefully look forward to continuing to serve Him, knowing that while some have planted and some have watered Pilgrim Church, God gave, and continues to give the increase (I Corinthians 3:6 KJV). □

[compiled by Cristel Tufenkjian (Former Moderator) and John Eleazarian (Vice Moderator)]



Easter Egg hunt.

An American Intern in Armenia

Part 2



By William Denk

I first learned of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) from a close friend, whose husband is Armenian. Fascinated by the ancient history and complicated language, I always wanted to visit Armenia. Though I am not Armenian, my family has some roots in the Greek island of Chios, which has always made me feel very sympathetic to the difficult history of the Armenian people. The opportunity to serve and learn while in Armenia was my dream come true.

During my first week in Yerevan, I witnessed AMAA's direct impact on the lives of many. The AMAA clinic, staffed by highly qualified medical professionals, helps Yerevan's poorest citizens, including refugees from Syria, who settled in Armenia after fleeing Syria's recent political conflict. Outside of Yerevan, I saw some of Armenia's ancient monuments, such as the 2,000-year-old Temple of Garni. I also went on a day trip to the historical city of Gyumri, halfway across the country from Yerevan. Though a great cultural center within Armenia, Gyumri unfortunately still suffers from the effects of the 1988 earthquake. Much still needs to be rebuilt.

Besides Yerevan and Gyumri, I saw many other AMAA sites, including the ones located in the beautiful and ancient region of Artsakh. Here, I enjoyed delicious fish; amazing because Artsakh and Armenia are completely landlocked. AMAA's work in Artsakh is critical, sponsoring many families that live through frigid winters without heat. AMAA's Shogh centers offer otherwise unavailable services to the children



All of the staff at the AMAA's Nerses and Arpine Aynilian Health Care Center in Yerevan are highly trained, serving those most in need.

of families trapped in cycles of abuse and poverty. AMAA kindergartens in Artsakh offer the best early education in the region, as many parents told me. After visiting over a dozen locations in such a short time, I settled in the historic city of Vanadzor to help restore the Evangelical Church of Armenia (ECA), while teaching English classes to adults and children. The Vanadzor Church congregation worships in an incredibly beautiful church, supported by the AMAA.

The Church in Vanadzor is less than twenty years old; however, a serious roof leak left staining and cracks in the chapel. The Church's heating system had also been repaired only a few



Working from a high ladder, William Denk repairs the Chapel's walls of the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Vanadzor.

months before my arrival, leaving holes in the walls and several trenches in the concrete floor. A local skilled craftsman, Aram, was brought in by the AMAA to help train me for this work. With his help, I learned to repair the walls with gypsum, which differs from the method I learned in America. After a couple of weeks working with Aram, I continued the repairs by myself for several months. This was a wonderful opportunity for me: I even had an opportunity to work with cement and repair tiles, a skill I learned working with my father back in the United States.

While in Vanadzor, many adults came to Church to learn English. The students' dedication was amazing. One young woman, who works in a local school, proudly showed me a binder she made, stuffed with hundreds of pages of photographs, which she had defined in English. My students' vocabulary and fluency were impressive since some of them had learned most of their English on their own.

I also had the chance to work with children in the local AMAA Shogh center who are very intelligent and always eager to learn. Many of the students were English enthusiasts and demonstrated their strong vocabulary, mostly acquired outside of school. A couple of my students were incredibly gifted young artists who illustrated every new word they learned.

Through Zoom, I got the chance to meet AMAA staff members from throughout Armenia, including many cities and villages I still have not visited. These AMAA workers are sacrificing their free time to learn English. Most of them older than I am, as they were educated at a time when English was not widely offered in Armenian schools. However, they are already speaking in class, answering questions, and carrying on conversations, often without mistakes.

I have strongly benefited from my relationship with the AMAA and the people of Armenia. While in Armenia, I learned many new skills and simultaneously enjoyed the Armenian people's kindness and hospitality. I even learned to speak and write a little Armenian, thanks to the generosity of an AMAA Armenian teacher, who volunteered her time to help me. □



William Denk (right) with Viktor Karapetyan (left), AMAA's Artsakh Representative, and Anahit Danielyan, AMAA's Shushi Shogh Center's Director.



L to R: William Denk, Badveli Arman Martirosyan Pastor of Evangelical Church of Armenia in Sisian, and Asatur Petrosyan (AMAA driver).



As one parent said, "There is no other kindergarten as good as AMAA's Hagop & Lydia Baghdikian Kindergarten in Stepanakert, Artsakh."



Children love the food they receive every day in AMAA's Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian Kindergarten in Martakert, Artsakh.

AMAA Empowers Armenia's Navur School in Tavush Region with New Physics Lab

In 2019, the "One Village" Consortium, which was initiated by the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), chose to assist the border village of Navur in the Region of Tavush. The Consortium, consisting of 11 prestigious local and international organizations, was formed in 2014, on the occasion of the Armenian Genocide Centennial. Its first mission was to join forces to help the Martuni village of Kegharkunik Region and has been active since its inception.

In May 2020, as a member of the "One-Village" Consortium, the AMAA donated a physics laboratory worth 1,300,000 drams to Navur School, which was received with great enthusiasm and excitement from the teachers and students. The laboratory is now equipped with devices and instructions that can be used for experiments in the physics, electrodynamics and magnetism departments.

The Navur School administration, teachers, students and parents express their deep gratitude to the AMAA for this initiative.

To date, the "One-Village" Consortium has implemented several educational, development and relief projects in Navur, including the installation of water pipes, the construction of a soccer field, and the provision of furniture to the School.

Responding to the Call to Action by the President of the Republic of Armenia; President of Hayastan All Armenian Fund's Board of Trustees, Armen Sarkissian, the AMAA also supported the 'Hayastan' All Armenian Fund campaign to "Empower the Remote Border Communities" with an emergency assistance of \$25,000. □



Meet Our Staff at AMAA

Aren Deyirmenjian, Deputy Armenia Representative

Aren Deyirmenjian has been part of the AMAA family for almost a year, since moving from his hometown of Beirut to join Yerevan's management team at Baghramyan last September. Aren's personal journey in faith took him through what he calls an "awakening process" which made him realize that he had to leave the comfort of his home and venture into the unknown to find true meaning and purpose.

Aren had been part of his family's manufacturing business in Lebanon, after graduating from the American University of Beirut in 2013 with a bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture. In 2016, he pursued an MBA degree in Montreux, Switzerland, graduating in 2018. When paths crossed with the AMAA a year later, he thought it was a good time to step out of his role in the family business and bring his management experience into different uses in humanitarian missions and kingdom causes.

Currently, Aren serves as Deputy Armenia Representative for the AMAA. Some of his daily responsibilities include overseeing construction projects, liaison with the finance team, budget preparation, and writing grant proposals. He also regularly visits various AMAA offices in Armenia and Artsakh to learn more about the needs of the communities in each region. He works closely with Harout Nercessian, AMAA Armenia Representative, to outline strategies, as well as evaluate current and past programs with concerned parties. Together, they also form part of the Avedisian High School local Board, regularly advising them on plans and activities.

Aren is a musician and plays in Nor Yerk's worship band. He uses his free time playing the piano, enjoying Armenia's rich musical scene, traveling, exercising, reading, and food-tasting.

His motivation remains to be an obedient servant; one who tries to accomplish what the Lord has put before him. May all glory return to the One who has provided the calling.

"Faithful is He who calls you, and He will bring it to pass." 1 Thessalonians 5:24





Meet Our Veteran Pastors

Rev. George Kevork Terian

George Kevork Terian was born in 1940 in Jerusalem to Hagop and Satenig Terzbashian. George abbreviated his surname when he became a naturalized citizen of the United States. From early childhood, his parents instilled in him the Christian faith.

He attended the local Armenian Community School (Serpotz Tarkmanchatz) from 1948 until 1960, when he graduated. There he had the privilege to study Classical Armenian (Grapar) under the tutelage of Archbishop Norayr Bogharian who was recognized as one of the most prominent scholars in the study of ancient Armenian manuscripts.

After being overwhelmingly convinced that Jesus was calling him to the Gospel ministry, he received a partial scholarship from Middle East College in Beirut, Lebanon, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in theology and history in 1967. At that time Middle East College (now University) was affiliated with Loma Linda University of Loma Linda, CA.

As fate would have it, in June of 1967, the Six-Day War broke out, and the Israelis captured East Jerusalem from Jordan. George became stranded in Lebanon because he could not return to his birthplace, Jerusalem. The Israeli government decreed that all non-Jews, who were not physically present in the Holy City at the time of its conquest, would not be allowed to return as permanent residents. That meant that George was now a refugee who was not allowed to seek employment in Lebanon; furthermore, he did not have sufficient funds to pursue graduate studies in the United States.

According to God's providential arrangement, George was invited to serve as a Christian missionary in Tehran, Iran, where he taught English to Iranian students and businessmen by using the New Testament as the main textbook. The English Language School, operated by American Missionaries, was a highly effective tool to communicate the Gospel message to Shiite Muslims. George's mastery of the Arabic language enabled him to acquire a working knowledge of Farsi within six months, and that facilitated his interaction with the natives. It was in Tehran where George met his future life-partner, the former Alice Hovsepian, whom he married in 1970. George and Alice celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on July 15 of this year.

During the year 1973-74, George enrolled at Andrews University in Michigan, where he received a Master of Arts degree

in Biblical Languages. After his graduation, he was invited by his alma mater to teach Hebrew and Koine Greek for two years. Due to the civil war in Lebanon, George decided to immigrate with his family to the United States.

In 1977, Rev. Terian was invited to pastor a church in Bloomington, IN, where he served for eight years. Bloomington being a University town, gave Alice the golden opportunity to earn a B.S. degree in Computer Science and support her husband's ministry.

In 1984, Rev. Terian and his family moved to the Kansas City Metropolitan area where his wife worked for Trans World Airlines as a computer programmer, and he served as a pastor-evangelist in both Kansas and Missouri. Between 1990 and 1998, in addition to his pastoral duties, he also published a quarterly publication called, **"The Living Word"** which explained Christian doctrines to the unchurched.

In April 1988, Rev. Terian was one of ten people who established the Armenian Cultural Society of Greater Kansas City which raised \$60,000 to help the victims of the disastrous earthquake that rocked northwestern Armenia on December 7, 1988.

In 1998, he and his family moved to Southern California, and on April 1, 2000, he was installed as Senior Pastor of the Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church in Pasadena, CA where he served for 18 years until his retirement on April 15, 2018. It is worth mentioning that at the start of Rev. Terian's pastorate, the Cilicia Church had a debt of \$50,000, however, at the time of his retirement, the congregation had over \$350,000 in their bank account.

In 2002, Rev. Terian was elected to be the editor-in-chief of the "Forum" magazine which was published quarterly. He held that position for six consecutive years. He also served as Chairman of the AEUNA Publications Committee for four years (2004-2008). The most surprising event of his term of service was when the librarian of Harvard University asked for the back issues of the "Forum" to include them in the Library of Near Eastern Studies.

On March 31, 2019, Rev. Terian was pulled out of his retirement when the Immanuel Armenian Congregational Church of Downey, CA invited him to be their Interim Minister. Then on September 22, 2019, at a duly called Congregational Meeting, it was unanimously voted to appoint him as their Senior Pastor.

Rev. Terian believes that God has endowed him with good health to let him continue planting the seeds of truth "in season and out of season" (2 Timothy 4:2). □



Merdinian School Holds Commencement Despite COVID-19 Pandemic

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and current public safety measures, the C. & E. Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School in Sherman Oaks, CA held its graduation ceremonies in the School's parking lot, on Sunday, June 14, 2020. Beginning at 9:30 am, the School had three separate ceremonies.

At the Kindergarten Graduation, Principal Lina Arslanian pointed out in her remarks that due to the situation created by COVID-19, the School faced an urgent and unprecedented situation. In a matter of a few days, the School administration, and the teaching staff, in cooperation with the parents, managed to switch to distance learning and complete the school year. Following her speech, Mrs. Arslanian invited the Kindergarten graduates and their parents to approach the stage while staying in their cars to receive their diplomas and gifts.

Following the Kindergarten "drive through" graduation ceremony, the Elementary School graduates and their parents entered the School's parking lot in their cars and parked. Hovhannes Benneian, the student with the highest average grade

in the class, read his message in Armenian, and Adriana Arakelian, the student with the second highest average grade, read her message in English. Graduating students were then called to the stage one by one to receive their diplomas and gifts and be photographed in front of a special poster.

Finally, the eighth-grade students entered the School's parking lot in their parents' cars and parked near the stage area. Following the social distancing rules, each graduating student got out of their parents' car and stood in front of the stage.

Julia Ayrapetyan, who had the second highest average grade in class, read her salutatorian message in English. She noted that she had only attended Merdinian this year, yet she was thankful to everyone for how well she was received. She added that she had gained so much knowledge in that short period of time, which will serve as a foundation for her future education, and for countless pleasant moments that will never be forgotten.

Nayiri Karadjian and Alexa Bouchakian, who had scored the highest average grade in the class, read their valedictorian messages. Nayiri in her Armenian message confirmed



that Merdinian was not only a school but also a home that helped her grow and develop, sowing the seeds of success. In her English valedictorian message, Alexa mentioned the words of Winnie the Pooh, "How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard," and added, that something was Merdinian for her. She had spent eleven years in a place where she felt safe and secure. "My days at this wonderful school are unforgettable. Thank you for giving me this opportunity, and I am grateful to my teachers who inspired me and have always been by my side," she said.

Hovsep Ayvazyan, who scored the third highest average grade in the class, on behalf of his classmates handed Mrs. Arslanian a beautiful framed collage of the graduating class pictures to be displayed next to the previous years' class photo collage.

The ceremony ended with a prayer offered by Lena Ekmekjian, Head of Merdinian's Religion Department.

Merdinian has completed an unusual school year and the Class of 2020 will always remember that they are the graduates of an extraordinary year. Congratulations and bon voyage to the graduates! □



Salutatorian Julia Ayrapetyan.



Valedictorian Nayiri Karadjian.



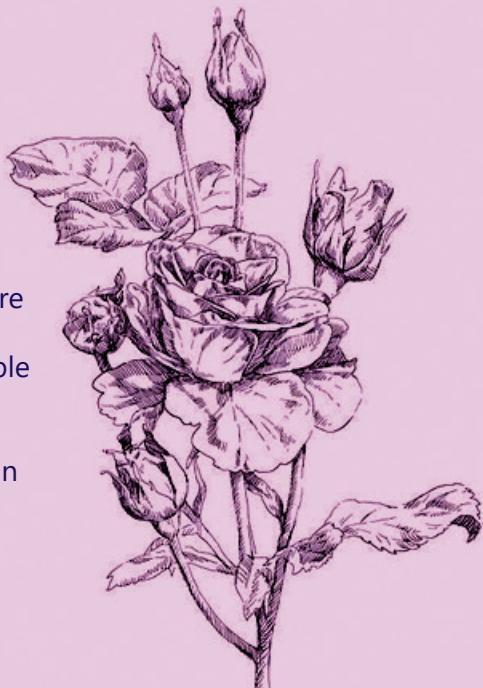
Valedictorian Alexa Bouchakian.

(Adapted by Louisa Janbazian from an Armenian article)

Child & Orphan Care Program, Escape to Our Secret Garden

In the light of the COVID-19 global outbreak and due to the safety and well-being of our guests, the AMAA decided to cancel its April 18, 2020 Child and Orphan Care 'Escape to Our Secret Garden' Luncheon, Fashion Show and Silent Auction. Our hearts could not be more full with the demonstration of support from our incredible donors and sponsors who rose to the occasion and supported the vital cause the AMAA Orphan and Child Care Program serves in Armenia and Artsakh. With this health crisis, the needs of the poor will only increase. The AMAA remains diligent in ensuring the needs of these families are met.

We look forward to 2021 with the hope we can all come together again in celebration for this important cause. Until then it is our wish that all our members and friends continue to take care of themselves.



Donations Received with Thanks

Platinum Benefactor: \$40,000

The Segel Family

Esteemed Benefactor: \$20,000

TF Educational Foundation

Gold Benefactor: \$15,000

Artevel Foundation

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Patron: \$2,000 – \$2,500

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Friend: \$300 and below

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Tamar Najarian

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New Child Sponsorship

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Henry Dabbo

Christoper Gasparian

Ara Issagholian

Houri Kassabian

Sandy McNutt

Sevan Parsekhian

Sarah Sutherland

A People Rooted in God's Word

By **Talia Kassabian**, AMAA 2020 James G. Jameson Essay Contest Winner, High School Level

As the first Christian nation, little Armenia is a big part of Christian history. I feel great pride for my heritage, being born into a people who have followed the Lord for many centuries, and stood for the truth of the Bible even through persecution. It is an amazing reality to me that the faith I have now carried by my family for so many generations, gives me a deep connection with my ancestors. Armenia dates back thousands of years, and has yielded a rich culture that is deeply rooted in the Word of God since the Gospel was first received by our people through the Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew. Since that time, Armenians have been producing religious artwork, music, and traditions that bring together my heritage and faith. This history has created a community and closeness among the Armenian people, and it continues the legacy of our people as one, that listens to God's call.

Armenia first announced its allegiance to God in 301 AD, but its journey with the Lord began long before then. Being such an ancient group of people, Armenians are mentioned in the Bible and other early manuscripts. Along with Noah's Ark landing on the plains of Mt. Ararat, 2 Kings 19:37 talks about "escaping into the land of Armenia," and Jeremiah 51:27 mentions the "kingdom of Ararat." This fact gives me great joy, knowing that my ancestors were living nearby Jesus and His disciples during the time of His ministry. That when Jesus instructs to go and share the Good News to the Gentile nations, Armenia was a part of that statement. Another one of these connections is that one lineage of my family immigrated to America from Smyrna, which is one of the churches addressed in Revelation. I feel so blessed to not only be part of a culture that has existed for many millennia and withstood many trials, but also one that has rooted themselves in Christ so early in history.

The Armenian Church, in its extensive past, has had many years to develop traditions unique to the universal Church. The beauty of the churches, architecture, artwork, and music is a special part of our culture, and brings me closer to our history of faith. Raised in an area of California with no Armenian community, traveling to Fresno, where there is a large Armenian community that both my parents were raised in, was always an exciting experience for me. I was raised in my father's church, Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church, participating in Vacation Bible School with my cousins, and attending Sunday morning services with my grandparents. I still visit often, and love being able to surround myself with family and other Armenians who have known me since I was little.

Every time I walk into the sanctuary, I am in awe of the beauty and grandeur that contrasts with all the Western churches I have been to. The wooden pews face the pulpit, adorned with gold crosses, candelabras, and heavy fabric. On the right and left, you look up to see ornate stained glass windows, expressing in color the stories of the Bible. Above, the high ceilings and spire stretch into the sky, with sunlight shining through the small stained glass windows of the apostles looking down on the people. All this accompanied by hymns played on the organ create an incredible experience that brings me close to the Lord and instills in me a desire to praise His holy name. I have come to learn that Armenians appreciate beauty, and it is revealed in the way they adorn their churches, that it may be set apart as a holy place.

Another unique aspect of Armenian Christianity is the *khachkar* (cross stone), or Armenian stone cross.

This is an important symbol for our culture, one that can be seen all over Armenia. Ever since I was little, my dad has worn his gold Armenian cross necklace given by his church for serving as an acolyte. It has always been such a special and nostalgic memory for me. So, my parents decided to give me one of my own as a gift for my 8th grade graduation. It is one of my most treasured items, being handmade in Armenia, and resting on my mother's gold chain. I rarely take it off, and it is a reminder and external symbol of my faith and Armenian heritage. It reminds me of my cultural and eternal identity, and I wear it with great pride.

I continually seek to grow and encourage others in the faith, knowing that I, along with my generation, am the future of the Armenian people. Raised by two Armenian parents brought up in sister churches, I was introduced to the Gospel at a young age, and have been blessed with a loving Christian family. As I have grown up, my faith and relationship with the Father has grown and matured. Through the ups and downs of my life, He has revealed to me time and time again His faithfulness and love. Each day I seek to grow more into the image of His son, and be a light that He may use for His glory. I treasure our Armenian traditions and connection to the Christian church, seeing them as a special link to that past and world of our ancestors. In a world where so many are turning away from God, I aspire to remain rooted and grounded in His love. In this way, I am proud to be of the Armenian Christian youth of today, and seek to serve the community of our people.

The Christian roots set in place by our ancestors so long ago still remain today, and is a link that connects the Armenian community around the world. The many programs and organizations that seek to preserve those roots in the new generations ensure that our traditions continue. From Biblical times to today, the people of Armenia have a long history full of ups and downs, art and culture, but most importantly, a longstanding faith in the Lord. Today, we have many symbols of that relationship with God, and traditions that connect us with the early churches of our ancestors.

I feel so blessed to be part of such a culture, and it only enhances the relationship I have with Christ. □



Տարածաշրջանի հակամարտ ուժերը պէտք է կարգաւորեն իրենց տարածայնութիւններու բանակցութիւններու սեղանին շուրջ եւ ոչ թէ անոր խաղաղ ու անմեղ բնակչութեան ճաշասեղաններուն վրայ:

Լիբանան Աղերս խաղաղութեան եւ վերակենդանացման

AFP / Getty

Զաւեն Խանճեան

Պյուուրի հզօր պայթումը, որ բազմաթիւ անմեղ Լիբանանցիներու կեանքը խլեց՝ իր ետին թողեկով հազարաւոր վիրաւորներ, աւելի քան աւերիշ էր: Անկախ այն իրականութենէն թէ արկած էր կամ կանխամտածուած ոճիո, վնասը չափազանց ահուելի էր եւ անկրեիլ: Աւերն ու կործանումը այնքան հսկայական էին եւ ծաւալուն, ոմանք զայն բնութագրեցին նմանը չունեցող Լիբանանի 15-ամեայ քաղաքացիական պատերազմի ընթացքին:

Երկիր մը, որ քաղաքական, տնտեսական և առողջական ճգնաժամն էր տառապահ, այժմ փորձառութիւնը կ'ունենայ բռնութեան եւ ֆիզիքական վնասի կեանքի եւ կալուածի հանդէա: Մեր սիրտերը կը ճնյուին պայթումի հետեւանքով զոհուածներուն եւ անոնց ընտանիքներուն համար: Իմ յոյս եւ աղօթքս է, որ այս բռնութիւնը չի ծաւալի երկրի մը մէջ, որ դարեր շարունակ կրթութեան լուսաւորութեան, տեղաշարժի եւ արտայայտութեան ազատութիւն, բնական գեղեցկութիւն եւ իր ժողովուրդի ջերմութիւնը սփոռած է չորսդին: Այս երկրին մէջ էր իմ բարձրագոյն ուսումնավայրը: Թող զրիերը հանգչին խաղաղութեամբ եւ Սուրբ Հոգին միխթարէ իրենց սիրելիներն ու հարազատները իր գօրութեամբ, որ մեր հասկացողութենէն վեր է:

Լիբանան՝ այժմ որեւէ ատելի անյապաղ կարիքը ունի երկու բանի.

1. ԽԱՂԱՋՈՒԹԻՒՆ՝ առաջնահերթ

40-ական թուականներու իր ձեռք բերած անկախութենէնի իվեր, այդ տարածաշրջանին մէջ մտքի ազատ արտայայտութեան, ազատ մանուկի, ազատ եկեւմուտի եւ անոր Աստուածատուր բնութեան գեղեցկութեամբ օրինուած եւ մատուցուած մշնոլորտի պատճառաւ, Լիբանան դարձած է կիզակետը տարածաշրջանի զոդարկուած եւ ծածուկ զադտնի զործողութիւններու եւ դաւադրութիւններու:

Մերձաւոր Արեւելիք սրտին վրայ հանգչող այս փոքր՝ երեմնի քրիստոնեայ մեծամասնութիւն ունեցող երկիրը, յոգնած է իր հոդին վրայ ճակատող հակամարտութիւններէ, թշնամութիւնէ, մարտերէ եւ պայքարէ: Այսօր Լիբանանը, իր ապականած քաղաքական խաւէն անկախ, ենթարկուած է հաւաքական, ուղղակի կամ անուղղակի պատժամիջոցերու՝ որոնք խախտած են անոր տնտեսութիւնը, անդամարտուած են առեւտուրը եւ երկրի բնակչութիւնը առաջնորդած սովամահութեան ճանապարհին: Մարդասիրկան ոգիով համահունչ մեր արժեքներուն, անհրաժեշտ է որ անմարդկային պատժամիջոցները ջնջուին, վերացնելով տարածաշրջանի բնակչութեան տառապանքը: **Տարածաշրջանի հակամարտ ուժերը պէտք է կարգաւորեն իրենց տարածայնութիւններու բանակցութիւններու սեղանին շուրջ եւ ոչ անոր խաղաղ ու անմեղ բնակչութեան ճաշասեղաններուն վրայ:**

ԽԱՂԱՋՈՒԹԻՒՆԸ հրամայական է եւ գերակայ Լիբանանի մէջ եւ շուրջ:

2. ՎԵՐԱԿԱՌՈՒՑԵԼ ԵՐԿԻՐԸ

Քաղաքական, տնտեսական, ֆինանսական՝ առաւել COVID-19 համաճարակի անէծքներով տանջուած, այժմ Լիբանան կարիքը ունի երկրագունդի բոլոր պարկեշտ, սիրող եւ հոգատար ձեռքերու՝ փրկութեան հասնելու համար: Շտապ օգնութեան կարիքները՝ ինչպէս սնունդ, դեղօրայք, ապաստանարան, **որոնք անյապաղ պէտք էին երեւ, այսօր կ'աւելնան պարզ կարիքով մը եւս, ծածկոյթ՝** (ապակի կամ այլ) երկրի կառոյցներու եւ բարյականի փշրուած պատուհաններու ու դրներու:

Բոլոր քանդիչ ձեռքեր՝ հեռու Լիբանանէն:

Եւ կոչ՝ բոլոր խաղաղասէր, կարեկից եւ քրիստոսակորիզ ձեռքերու ու սրտերու՝ հասնելու եւ փրկելու Լիբանանը եւ տարածաշրջանը:

Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութիւնը նախարարու է անսասան շարունակելու իր շտապ օգնութիւնը Լիբանանի մեր համայնքներուն՝ անոնց ներշնչելով ՅՈՅՈՒ եւ վերածունդ:

Ծնորհակալութիւն ձեր աջակցութեան համար: □

Յայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան Խօսքը Յայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցի Յիմնադրութեան 174-ամեակին առիթով

Այսօր Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ 174րդ տարեդարձը կը յիշատակենք: Փառք կուտանք Աստուծոյ այն լուսաւոր ճանապարհին համար որու ընդմեջէն, հաւատարիմ Եկեղեցւոյ հիմնաքար Յիսուս Քրիստոսի, Եկեղեցին ընթացաւ իր ծնունդին իվեր:

174-ամեայ իր ծառայութեան հարուստ ժառանգութիւնը, անկախ իր երկունքի ցաւերէն, լուսաւոր պսակ մըն է այս համայնքի ճակատին, հոգեւոր, կրթական, մշակութային եւ ընկերային ծառայութիւններու դաշտին մէց:

Սակայն կենդանի Եկեղեցին չկրնար անցեալի փառքով հպարտանալ առանց իր առաքելութեան անժամանակ կիրարկման հոլովոյցով արդարանալուն:

Ուստի, Քրիստոնէական խոնարի ոգիով, ինքնարքնութեամբ եւ առարկայական մօսեցումով, հարկ է,

ա. Բոցաշունչ ոգիով տարածել Աւետարանի բարի լուրջ սատարելով Հայ անհատի հոգեւոր վերածնունդին՝ առաջնորդելով զայն Աստուծային փրկութեան ափին:

բ. Հաւատարիմ մնալ հիմնադիրներու պատկանելիութեան, պահելով Հայաստանյացի դիմագիծը, հոգալով եւ զարգացնելով Մեսրոպեան լեզուն ու Հայ մշակոյցը:

գ. Յարգել Մայր Եկեղեցին, սատարել անոր անսասանութեան, գորովալից սիրով գնահատել եւ բաջալերել Եկեղեցւոյ բարեկարգութիւնը եւ հաւատարմութեան կոչ ուղղել ժողովուրդին անոր հանդէա:

Քրիստոնէական կեանքի ճանապարհի ընթացքը Տէր Աստուծոյ բարի եւ ողորմած կամքին եւ ձեռքբերուն մէջ է:

Այդ ճանապարհին վրայ, Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան անունով՝ բարի երթ կը մաղթեմ Հայաստանյաց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ:

Զաւէն Խանճեան, Գործադիր Տնօրին
Յուլիս 1, 2020



AMAA's Message on the 174th Anniversary of the Evangelical Church Of Armenia

Birthdays are joyful occasions and birthday celebrations are signs of vitality and life.

Birthdays are also solemn occasions to ponder upon accomplishments, evaluate results and mobilize for the future. A good measuring tool of self-evaluation is the celebrant's impact observed.

The Armenian Evangelical Church is celebrating its 174th anniversary. To be accurate the founders baptized the church as "The Evangelical Church of Armenia," there in the name bearing the self-realization of the identity of the church and the communities rallying around it.

Today, as we celebrate yet another birthday of the Evangelical Church of Armenia, we praise God for the illumination that it brought to the nation from the grounds of the historical Homeland to the Near East, all of the Armenian Diaspora and back to independent Armenia.

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) embraces the grateful notion that the cradle of its glorious century plus service rendered to the nation is the founding of the Evangelical Church of Armenia in 1846 in Constantinople. It could be argued that the AMAA enjoys a symbiotic relationship of interdependence with the Church where, having been delivered by it has been faithful in its mission of reinforcing, supporting and sustaining the deliverer and its mission.

The legacy of the Evangelical Church of Armenia on the stage of the nation's modern history is one of a glowing halo of service in educational, spiritual, cultural, social and physical needs – an esteemed, applauded and glorious journey.

The Church however cannot justify its existence and stall its zest relying on past glories. The living church of Christ, of which the AMAA is an integral part, must be ready and alert to face new challenges than an ever-evolving world breeds every day. Challenges of declining morality and spiritual values, discord within the church, existential threats to Christians and minorities in the Near East and erosion of identity and the language of the founders.

It is our heartfelt wish and expectation that the Church, faithful to its core mission, will share the Good News of the Gospel all over the world for a witness to all nations calling man to turn back to the fountain of eternal love and good, God Almighty.

Happy Birthhday Evangelical Church of Armenia.

Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO

July 1, 2020

Գրախօսական

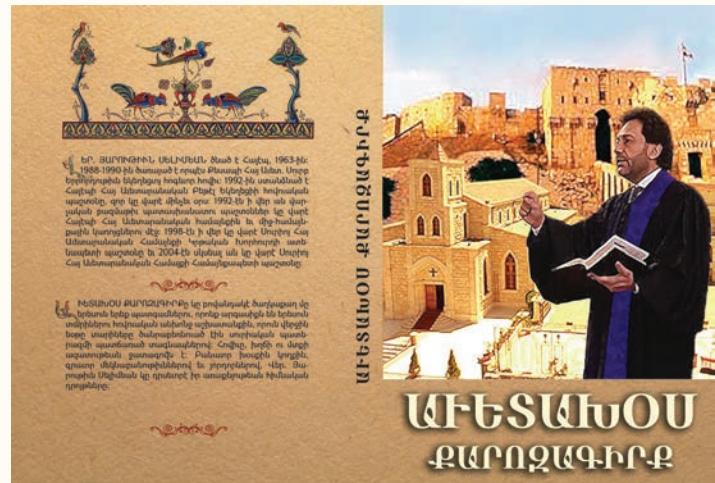
«ԱՐԵՏԱԽՈՒ ՔԱՐՈՉԱԳԻՐՔ» Յեղիսակ՝ Վերապատուելի Յարութիւն Սելիմեան

Կը Ներկայացնէ Տիկին Լալա Միսկարեան-Մինասեան

այց բազմաբերուն հոգեւոր գրականութիւնը կը հարստանայ նոր մատեանով մը, որ Վերապատուելի Յարութիւն Սելիմեանի «Աւետախու քարոզագիրք»ն է: Տաղագրուած է 2019-ին, Լիբանան՝ Մերձաւոր Արեւելքի այ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիներու Միութեան Հրատարակական Գրասենեակի կողմէն: Զերք կ'առնես փառաւոր ու խնամուած հասոր մը՝ ընտիր թուղթով ու բժախնդիր տպագրութեամբ:

Առաջին էջին գիրքի հովանաւոր՝ Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան Գործադիր Տնօրին Տիար Չաւէն Խանճեանին «Երկու խօսք»ն է: Ան իբրեւ բնարան ունի՝ «Ղասնզի Ասուուած մեզի երկշուռութեան հոգի չտուաւ, հապա զօրութեան ու սիրոյ եւ զգաստովեան» (Բ. Տիմոթէոս 1.7): Բնարանը ակներեւաբար նկատի ունի Վերապատուելիին անձն ու գործը: Իր կուռ խօսքին մէջ Տիար Խանճեան լիովին արժանին կը հասուցէ Վերապատուելիին երեսուն տարիներու հոգեւոր ծառայութեան ու մասնաւորաբար՝ Սուրբի աշխարհակործան պատերազմի տարիներուն անոր տարած բացառիկ քրտնաշան աշխատանքին՝ ի պաշտպանութիւն եւ իր բարօրութիւն իր հօսին ու նաւել հայ համայնքին: Տիար Խանճեանին խօսրով՝ նման նուիրում մը «Կրնար յենի եւ խարսխուի միայն ու միայն Ասուուածային շնորհի մը պարզեւր հանդիսացող անսասան հաւատքի մը վրայ»:

Իր «Ներածական»ին մէջ Վերապատուելին շնորհակալութիւն կը յայտնէ գիրքի ծնունդին իրենց նպաստը թերողներուն, ապա կը գրէ, որ իր հովուական ծառայութեան երեսունամեակին առթիւ լոյս ընծայած «Սոյն քարոզագիրքը առջեմ է հայ համայնքի զասակներուն՝ քարոզագիտական սահմանումներով լուսաբանուելու և քրիստոնէական հաւատքը ամրապնդելով՝ կեանք իր ուղիղ ճշգրիտութեան մէջ»:



188 էջեր ընդգրկող այս գիրքին վերջին էջերը յատկացուած են Վերապատուելիին կենսագրութեան եւ գործունեութեան՝ հայերէն ու անգլերէն լեզուներով:

«Աւետախու քարոզագիրք»ը կը բովանդակէ հինգ բաժիններ, խորագրեալ՝ Հաւատքի դրսւորում, Հաւատքի կեանքի նորոգութիւն, Հաւատքի աճում, Հաւատքի կատարելութիւն եւ Հաւատքի զօրութիւն: Ինչպէս վերնագիրները կը յուշեն՝ հերթական դասաւորումը պատահականօրէն չէ ընտրուած, այլ իւրաքանչիւր հատուածին տակ տարբեր ու բազմակողմանի կը դիտուի կրօնաբարոյական իմաստով մարդուն աճը՝ իր հաւատքի ճամբուն մէջ:

Զարողը իր էութեան մէջ կենդանի խօսք է, մարդոց համախմբումի մը ուղղուած, անոնց հոգին ու մտքին ներգործելու միտուած, եւ որոշեալ պատզամը տեղ հասցնելու յաջողութիւնը գերազանցապէս կախուած է քարոզիչին անձնական կարողութենէն ու ապրումին անկենծութենէն: Արդ՝ որքան որ ուսանելի ու հաճելի է Վերապատուելիին Սուրբքրային թերանացի մեկնաբանութիւնները կամ բանախօսութիւնները

ունկնդրելը, նոյնքան եւ՝ անոր գրաւոր խօսքին ընթերցումը: Այս քացախկ կարողութիւնը ունի կրօնական իմաստով հոգեւոր նիւթ մը մատուցանելու ոգեղինացած, առաւել հարստացած փիլիսոփայական, արուեստի եւ այլ բնագաւառներէ քաղուած միտքերով, պատկերոփինակներով: Անոր քարոզը քրիստոսի օրերու նիւթերը կը մատուցանէ 21-րդ դարու մարդու ընկալումներուն ու մտային մակարդակին համապատասխան՝ օգնելով անոր իր քայերը առնելու մեր քարդ, հակասական ու տատակոտ ճանապարհներուն վրայ:

Այս քարոզագիրքին ընթերցումէն կը համոզուիս, որ քրիստոնէական ուսմունքը եւ քարոյականը Վերապատուելիին խօսքին ընդմշչէն ունակ են կրթել մարդս ոչ միայն իբրեւ սոսկ քրիստոնեայ, այլեւ յատկապէս իբրեւ մարդկութեան, ընկերութեան, ազգին մէկ անդամ՝ իր քարոյական կեցուածքով ու պարտականութիւններով: Այսպէս՝ 91-րդ էջին վրայ կը կարդանք. «Իսկական հաւատացեալը չի կրնար իր քարոյական չափանիշներուն առնչույթեամբ յժեթենորէն մտածել, եթէ նոյնիսկ անկումներու հեղեղներով պաշարուած դրայ: Ան երբէք արտօնելու չէ, որ աղոստած, աղաւաղուած, սրատաւորուած եւ նսեմացած խեղաստակութիւնները իր ամէնօրեայ քառամթերքին եւ քրիստոնէալայել կեանքին մաս կազմէն»:

Հատորին մէջ կը հանդիպինք միտքերու, զորս մտածել կու տան ոչ միայն Աստուծոյ ու մարդոց հետ մեր անմիջական յարաբերութիւններուն շուրջ, այլ առիթ կ'ընծայեն խորանալու, քննելու Աստուծոյ պատկերին ու պատկերացումին համապատասխան արարուած մարդուն վերապահուած դերը Աստուծոյ արարչագործութեան՝ Տիեզերքին մէջ եւ մեր պատասխանատութիւնը՝ այդ ամբողջին հանդէպ: Այս գաղափարին սերտորէն կ'առնչուի քրիստոնէութեան մարդակերտիչ մէկ այլ զաղափար՝ մեզմէ, մեր էութենէն այլոց ու աշխարհին քան մը տպալու գաղափարը, զոր Վերապատուելին կ'արտայայտէ սապէս. «Խնդիրը կը վերաբերի բնդիմանրասպէս տալու մասին, այսինքն՝ մեր ժամանակէն, մեր կամնեցողութենէն, եղիուսարդական կարողութենէն, մարդկային հոգեւոր հարստութենէն ու գիտութենէն, այսինքն՝ իբրեւ մարդ, քու ամրողական էութենանդ մէջ ի՞նչ քան ունիս, որ կրնաս տրամադրել Աստուծոյ՝ մարդուն քարորութեան համար: Մեզմէ շատերու դժուարութիւնը այն է, որ կեանքի դրամատունէն կ'ուղեն սովոն՝ ինձ սուանց քան մը դնելու:»: Ապա կը յաջորդեն խորիմաստ միտքեր՝

«Մենք մեր ստացածով մեր ապրուստը կը շինենք, սական մեր ստուծով կեանքեր կը կերտենք» (Էջ 106-7):

Ապա՝ քրիստոս կ'ըսէ. «Ինչ քարի եւ լաւ է այն մարդուն համար, որ իր կեանքը իր ընկերուց համար կը դնէ» (Էջ 31):

Կամ՝ «Զախոր քրիստոնեան չի կրնար յաջող անհաս մը ողալ ընկերութեան մէջ, ոչ այլ նույրուած հայրենասէր մը՝ իր ազգին պատութեան մէջ: Շշմարիս հաւատացեալը,

ընկերութեան մէջ ինչ դիրքի վրայ որ ըլլայ, հականեխիչ ազդեցութիւն պէտք է ունենայ»:

Այնուհետեւ կը կարդանք ժուժկալութեան ու զգաստութեան հրատիրող խրատ մը, զոր Հովիւր կու տայ բոլոր չափանիշները կորսնցուցած մէր ժամանակներու մէջ կեանք մտնող երիտասարդին. «Աստուծութիւնը իր խօսքին միջոցով կը կրցէ, կը յոդորէ, կը սորվեցնէ և կը դաստիարակէ մարդու: Ուրեմն այդ պայքարին մէջ եթէ մարդին իր ցանկութիւններուն մէջ ազատ ձգես մնարքին հետ պիտի գործակցիս, սակայն եթէ զանիկս իշխանութեանդ տակ առնես և քու կեանքի համար Աստուծութիւնը կամքը յնդրես, այն ատեն պիտի հմանա կեանքի փորձութիւններուն վրայ յաղթահարելու միջոցը» (Էջ 179-80):

Յաջորդյումը եւս յաւերժական ճշմարտութիւն մըն է, որ վիանգամայն անհրաժեշտ էր փոխանցել պատերազմող Սուրբոյ քնակութեան ու տակաւին արդիական կը հնչէ ամբողջ երկրագունդի տագնապահար մարդկութեան համար՝ «Փոթորիկը Ժխտական փորձառութիւն պիտի չըլլայ մեզի համար: Մենք այդ փոթորիկի ընթացքին մէր խաղաղութիւնը պիտի պահենք, որպէսզի փոթորիկէն եւր եկած դրական եւ օրինեա արդիւնքը տեսնենք» (Էջ 69):

Յաճախ Աստուծածաշունչին ու Աւետարանին խօսքերը մեր մէջ ծնունդ կու տան հարցումներու կամ կասկածներու, քանի որ 21-րդ դարու մարդու մեր տրամարանութիւնը կը մերժէ ընդունի կարգ մը միտքեր, եթէ զանոնք կը հրամցուին ուղղակիօրէն, բառացի, առանց քնազրային ետին խորհուրդը բանալու: Հո՞ն է արդէն հոգեւոր հովիւրին դերը, զոր Վերապատուելին կը կատարէ հմտորէն, ծածկուած խորհուրդը ըմբռնելի ու հաճելի մեկնարաներով ու մատուցելով:

Վերապատուելիին քարոզագիրը ուսուցողական ու թելադրական ըլլալով հանդէրձ, որ իր առաքելութիւնն է, Աստուծածաշնէան խօսքի թաքնուած ծալքերը մեկնարաներու հմտութեամբ սովորական հաւատացեալը առինքներու, հետաքրքրելու կարողութիւնը ունի: Ան իր ունկնդիրը կամ ընթերցողը կը կապէ շնորհիւ իր խոր գիտելիքներուն, ճարտասանական բացառիկ ձիրքին, անկեղծ շունչին, առօրեայ մեր խնդիրներուն անմիջականօրէն անդրադառնալու եւ զանոնք շրջանցելու, դիմագրաւելու ուղիներ առաջարկելով, միանգամայն հարուստ լեզուով ու մշակուած ոնով:

Քսանմէկերորդ դարուն, որքան որ մարդը ինքզինք զարգացած ու յառաջիմած կարծէ, այնուամենայնիւ, եթք կեանքը կը բերէ մեր կարելիութիւններէն վեր աղետներ ու ցաւեր, առաւել ծանր ու խրթին առաջարանքներ կը դնէ մարդուն առջեւ, հաստատուն մնալու համար ան միշտ կարիքը պիտի զգայ Վերին Ոյժին, Անոր սիրոյն, միխթարող ու կենարա Խօսքին: Այդ խօսքը փոխանցողներէն մին է այս մատեանը, ինչի համար խորին շնորհակալութիւն կը յայտնենք Վերապատուելի Յարութիւն Սելիմեանին: □

ԼՈՒԱՎՈՐՉԻ ԿԱՆԹԵՂԸ

Յովհաննես Թումանյան

Կես գիշերին կանթեղը վառ
սախ է ընկած երկընքից,
Լուսավորչի կանթեղն անմար
Յայց մըթնած երկընքից:

Սախ է ընկած առանց պարան
Արագածի կատարին,
Ու սեղանից հըսկայական
Լուս է տալիս աշխարհին:

Լուս է տալիս երկար դարեր
Ու վառվում էն միշտ անշեղ
Սուրբի մաքուր արցունքները
Յուղի տեղակ նըրա մեջ:

Ոչ մարդկային ծեռ կըհասնի
Են ահավոր բարձունքին,
Եվ ոչ քամին կըհանգընի՝
Վիշապ-քամին ահագին:

Երբ պատում է մութ խավարը
Չընաշխարհիկ մեր երկրին,
Երբ տիրում է ահն ու վախը
Թույլ, կասկածոտ սըրտերին,

Ով անմեղ է, լիքը սիրով
Ու հավատով անսասան,
Ով նայում է վառ հովսերով
Դեպի Յայց ապագան, —

Նա կըտեսնի էն մըշտավառ
Զահը կախված երկընքից,
Ասես՝ աստծոն աչքը պայծառ
Յըսկում է ցած երկընքից:

1902



The Lamp of the Enlightener

Hovhannes Toumanian
Translated by T. Samuelian

Deep in the night the lantern burns bright,
hanging in heaven on high.
St. Gregory's lamp, ever ablaze
bans darkness from Armenia's sky.

Suspended in air, its light everywhere,
from the altar of Aragats' peak,
this candle shines forth, ever ablaze,
in a world often somber and bleak.

Fueled by pure tears of saints through the years
beyond reach of men's sinful hands,
untouched by fierce winds, ever ablaze,
breath of dragons it even withstands.

When darkness descends and terror upends
the faith of the weak and shaken,
this beacon of hope, ever ablaze,
Armenia's bright souls reawaken.

High in the sky, like God's watchful eye,
the torch gives them hope of salvation.
The Enlightener's lamp, ever ablaze
brings blessings upon this fair nation.



IN MEMORIAM: Raffy Hovanessian, M.D. (1938-2020)

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of a renowned humanist, a friend and member of the AMAA, Dr. Raffy Hovanessian, who passed away peacefully on May 27, 2020 at his home in Fort Lee, NJ surrounded by his beloved family. He was 81.

Dr. Hovanessian, who has been intimately associated with the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) since childhood, was born in Jerusalem to Arakel and Dirouhie Hovanessian who were orphans. His mother was from Yozgat, and his father's family was from Arapgil, where more than 30 family members were lost during the Genocide. His family was forced to leave his birthplace during the Arab-Israeli war and moved to Aleppo, Syria, where Raffy received his secondary education and the first two years of his college education in schools run by the Armenian Evangelical Church.

Inspired by his mother to become a doctor, Raffy continued his medical studies at the renowned American University of Beirut, where he specialized in internal medicine and gastroenterology, finally concluding his instruction at Johns Hopkins University.

Drafted into the U.S. army as a major, Dr. Hovanessian put his medical education to good use during the Vietnam War, focusing on infectious diseases of the stomach and colon during his assignment at the Fort Knox, KY Army Camp. Following one year in group practice in Munster, IN, Dr. Hovanessian went into private practice from 1970 to 2005.

A living embodiment of the spirit of Christ, Dr. Hovanessian has led an exemplary life lovingly and selflessly serving his people, nation and humanity as a physician, philanthropist, a family man and a community leader with an impeccable reputation. During the October 2017 AMAA Annual Meeting Banquet, Dr. Hovanessian honored the AMAA by serving as Master of Ceremonies at the Centennial Banquet in NJ. The Hovanessians have been life-long friends and supporters of the mission of the Armenian Missionary Association of America.

The AMAA extends its deepest condolences to his wife, Vicki-Shoghag Hovanessian, his children, grandchildren, their families and the entire Hovanessian family. Please join us in praying for Vicki-Shoghag and the family. May the Holy Spirit comfort them and give them the peace that passes all understanding. May they find joy in the memories and the profound, rich and legendary legacy he leaves behind.

The funeral service took place on June 8 at Rose Hills Mortuary Park, Whittier, CA.

He is survived by his wife, Vicki-Shoghag Hovanessian, son, Dr. Armen and Lena Hovanessian and children, Raffi and Atina, daughter, Ani Hovanessian and children, Ara, Armen and Alek, daughter, Aileen and Shahe Agopian and children, Alexy and Alexandra.

One of Dr. Hovanessian's beloved Bible verses is from 2 Timothy 4:7-8: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." □





IN MEMORIAM: Rev. Hovhannes M. Sarmazian (1934-2020)

On June 3, 2020, in Cambridge, Ontario, Canada, Rev. Hovhannes M. Sarmazian, a veteran Pastor of the greater Armenian Evangelical community, bid farewell to his earthly life and joined his heavenly Father. He was 86.

Rev. Sarmazian was born in June 1934 to Minas and Marie Sarmazian in Baghjaghaz Village, Kessab, Syria. He attended the village elementary school and later Kessab School for intermediate education.

However, his roadmap to Christian ministry did not follow the traditional path of high school, college and seminary. Being the eldest son, he had to interrupt his education and join his father in cultivating the land. In 1951, he was asked to teach at his village elementary school. Then the order came to join the Syrian Army as a conscript.

Upon the completion of his military service, he was offered a teaching position at the Armenian Evangelical Elementary School in Damascus, Syria where he served from 1959-62. During this sojourn, which he refers to as "his Damascus Road Experience," his future vision for the Christian Ministry was solidified. However, there was still one more hurdle to overcome – a high school diploma. He enrolled at the Armenian Evangelical College of Beirut, Lebanon where he attended class with teenagers and became a successful student. Now the road map was clear; he became a full-time college and seminary student. With diligence, he completed his studies and received a B.A. in Psychology in 1967 from Haigazian College, and B.D. from the Near East School of Theology in 1969.

Prior to his graduation, because of a vacancy in the Armenian Evangelical Church of Anjar, Hovhannes was appointed to serve the Church on an interim basis, which later became a permanent position. He began his work after a stormy period in the Church's life, but with his calm and loving approach, he brought peace and stability to the situation and served the Church for 22 years.

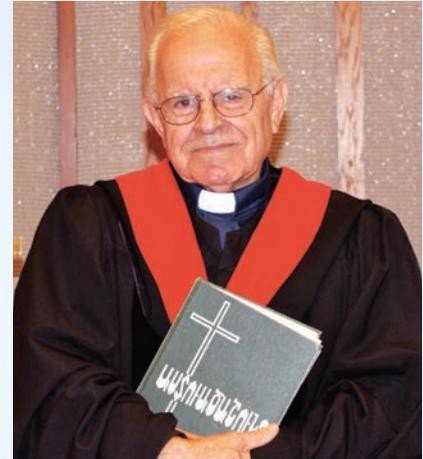
In 1972, he married Marie Janbazian who was a member of the Hilfsbund Mission that was serving the Anjar School and its Boarding Department as well as Muslims in the surrounding villages. On July 1, 1973, he was ordained by the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of the Near East as the Pastor of the Anjar Church.

When the Hilfsbund Mission transferred its work in Anjar and the surrounding area to the Near East Union in 1976, Rev. Sarmazian's responsibilities grew exponentially. It included the Directorship of the K-12 School, which included a large boarding population, teaching Armenian and religion courses.

In December 1990, Rev. Sarmazian, his wife, two sons and a daughter moved to Canada to serve the Armenian Evangelical Church of Cambridge, Ontario. After 50 years of faithful service, Rev. Sarmazian officially retired from this Church in January 2018, but continued to serve when called upon. He has written many short stories, sermons and articles on various topics and published three books.

Rev. Sarmazian is survived by his daughter Zela and her husband Hagop Kakousian, son Varant and his wife Brandi, son Baret, four grandchildren, brother Rev. Yessayi Sarmazian, and his extended Sarmazian and Janbazian families. He was predeceased by his wife Marie.

Due to current public safety precautions of the COVID pandemic, a private family funeral service was held on June 17 at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Toronto. A public celebration of his life will be held at a later date. □



(This obituary is an amended version of Rev. Sarmazian's biography written by Rev. John Khanjian, Ph.D.)

Sam Apelian

Sam Apelian of Studio City, CA passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by his family, on May 31, 2020. He was 94.



Sam was born in Kessab, Syria on December 22, 1925, to Hagop and Mari Zobian Apelian. Sam attended the Armenian Evangelical School in Kessab and upon relocating to Beirut, Lebanon, he continued his education at Armenian Evangelical Central High School of Ashrafieh in Beirut. It was during this time, his love for music became evident. Sam became a member of the School's choral group under the direction of famous composer/conductor Parsegh Gananchian and performed as soloist with his beautiful baritone voice.

In 1954, Sam migrated to Los Angeles as a student, majoring in aerospace lab technology. He became a member of the Gethsemane Armenian Church, where he joined the choir as a soloist.

Sam's love for music led to his formation of the Roseann Movel Dance Ensemble. It was through this dance group that he met his wife of 63 years, Annette Emerzian. Sam also performed in the Garine Opera as lead soloist and was the leading man in the Anoush Opera.

Sam was a proud Armenian. He began his community service in Lebanon as a member of the Hamaskayin Youth Group. In 1957 in the United States, under the leadership of Vahan Churukian, Sam and eight others founded the Kessab Educational Association of Los Angeles. He was also a member of the Pro-Komitas Choral Group, Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), Keri Gomideh, and the Armenian Assembly of North America, and supported the Armenian National Committee, his church, and the Armenian Missionary Association of America.

Sam was a man of principle, a devoted husband, father, and grandfather. He always emphasized the importance of home education, Christian education, and school education. On Saturdays, Sam home-schooled his children in the Armenian language, until the ARS Arax Chapter Saturday School was established. His faith was also of utmost importance. Upon the family's relocation to Studio City in 1974, the family faithfully attended the United

Armenian Congregational Church, where Sam sang in the choir under the direction of Hrant Agbabian and served on various Church committees and on the Board of Deacons. Sam was invited each year to sing on Vartanantz Sunday and on many other occasions, such as April 24 and Memorial Day.

Following his employment for a division of Boeing Company for 15 years, Sam and his wife opened a New York Style Deli restaurant in West Los Angeles. Upon his retirement, Sam began creating beautiful religious and national paintings in watercolor, which he shared with family and friends and with the Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Eskigian Museum.

His artistic design was also seen in his beautiful garden, especially in his topiaries in the shape of birds and deer. Because Sam was a proud American, his front yard was adorned with a topiary of the Statue of Liberty.

Retirement also led to international travel. Sam and his wife traveled extensively, the most meaningful trips of which were their two visits to Armenia and Karabagh.

Preceding Sam in death were his parents and older brother Haig. He is survived by his wife Annette, their children Mari Churukian and Mark Apelian and his wife Shelley, and three grandchildren, Kelley Anne Churukian, Amanda Marie Apelian, and Brandon Samuel Apelian, and many family and friends. □

Clara Armieh Bedrosian

Clara Armieh Bedrosian went to be with our Lord on June 3, 2020.



Born on September 27, 1932, Clara was the oldest child of Mourad and Elizabeth Bedrosian. Her younger brothers were Ernest, Krikor and Kenneth Bedrosian.

Clara's childhood began in Parlier, CA during the difficult Great Depression years. Many times, she reflected upon the 1930s which was a difficult time and their survival was a result of the tenacity of her parents and her grandfather Krikor Yeghoyan. Her memory of her Parlier days included walking each day with her younger brothers to the one room Fortuna elementary school and attending

the Olivet Armenian Congregational Church every Sunday.

Her family moved to Fowler, CA in 1942. In Fowler her life became centered around Fowler schools and the Fowler Baptist Church. She graduated from Fowler High School in 1951 and then achieved her teaching credential from Fresno State. Her first teaching position was in Fowler at James Marshall Elementary.

Always willing to pursue an adventure, she moved to the San Francisco area teaching school for many years as a part of the Daly City School District. In San Francisco she attended the St. Johns Armenian Apostolic Church where she was introduced to Lee Paul Bousian. They were married in 1966 and resided in Orinda where Lee was a key member of the cartography team at Rand McNally's San Francisco office.

Clara and Lee moved back to Fowler in 1980. She continued her teaching career until her retirement in 2002 bringing to close a 44-year career in education. Being back home, she took an active role caring for her mother Elizabeth Bedrosian. She greatly enjoyed being part of the Fowler St. Gregory Church and the various support actives at the California Armenian Home. During her life she was a strong supporter of the arts as well as programs related to the education of Armenian young people such as the Armenian Studies program at Fresno State University and more recently with her generous gift to the Armenian Missionary Association of America. Her community service activities included Daughters of Vartan, Ani Guild and the Fowler Improvement Association (FIA). To her many nieces and nephews, she was always known with the greatest of affection as "Auntie Clara." Her observation about this life was that there was no greater treasure here on earth than being a part of a loving and caring family.

Clara is survived by the families of her three brothers: Carlotta Bedrosian, Bryan and Rosie Bedrosian, Tammy and John Shegerian; Katherine Bedrosian, Linda and Dr. John Abdulian, Michael and Stephanie Bedrosian, Jane and Scott Asmar; Kenneth and Jane Bedrosian, Paul and Terri Bedrosian, Ara Bedrosian, and Kimberly Bedrosian. She greatly enjoyed and was proud of all the grandchildren of her three brothers: Armen, Lillian and Vivian Bedrosian, Courtney and Collette Mortanian, Tyler Shegerian, Alexander and Alexa Asmar, Daniel and Alexis Abdulian, Ryan, Michael Peter, Matthew, Isabella, Ara Ernest, and Kenneth Krikor Bedrosian.

Due to COVID-19, a private family service was held. □

Alice Bizdikian

Alice Mardirosian-Bizdikian passed away peacefully surrounded by family at her home in Laval, Quebec, Canada. She was 86.

Alice was born in Athens, Greece on December 25, 1933 and was the daughter of Vartan and Ogen (Eugenie) Mardirossian. She was the devoted wife of Rev. Jerair Bizdikian and loving mother to her four children John, Samuel, Ruth and Dikran (Richard), loving mother-in-law to Kiky Bizdikian Papadopoulos (wife to Samuel) and Marco Cortina (husband to Ruth) and loving grandmother to her five grandchildren, Jessica Alice, Melissa, Cassandra, Giuliano Jerair, and Alexander Vartan. She leaves behind two sisters, Ovsanna Bayerian (and her niece Kohar and nephew Hagop) and Mari Mardirossian.

Following his retirement from teaching English language in high schools and colleges in Montreal, Rev. Bizdikian responded to calls from different churches as an interim minister. Alice always accompanied her husband everywhere as "yeretsin Alice" – to the Armenian Evangelical Church of Chicago, IL, Armenian Memorial Church of Watertown, MA, First Armenian Church of Belmont, MA, Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, NJ, Armenian Evangelical Church of Toronto, Ontario, Canada and the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York, NY.

Alice had a good and gentle soul. Her smile and humility were her signature characteristics; her social interactions were always well received. She was loved and respected by everyone she met.

She was predeceased by her loving parents and two sisters Marika and Kenar and leaves behind many relatives and friends. □

Rose Nevert Daghlian

Rose Daghlian of Fresno, CA passed away on April 3, 2020 following a long illness. She was 79.

Born January 1, 1941 in Cairo, Egypt, Rose was the daughter of Rev. Theodore Daghlian and Yeranuhi



Chahmerian Daghlian and the niece of former AMAA President Nazar Daghlian.

In 1955 she moved to the United States with her family and settled in Fresno, CA. After graduating from Roosevelt High School, she went to Fresno State University where she earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Business. Soon after she was employed by Fresno County as a social worker, where she served close to 30 years. However, due to complications from a car accident she was forced to retire early.

She loved to travel. Her many excursions included destinations in Europe and the United States. Her favorite was a trip to Israel. Her home was filled with memories of those trips, which brought her great joy. When she was unable to travel anymore because of her illness she explored the world of crafting and created many beautiful items.

Above all Rose was a devout Christian and prayer warrior. She loved praying for her family and friends. Even through her illness, she never lost faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who gave her strength. Rose had a beautiful singing voice and would sometimes sing at her father's church, the First Armenian Presbyterian Church of Fresno. Even when home bound she would constantly sing to the Lord. Now she is singing with the angels in Heaven.

Rose is survived by her three sisters: Victoria Daghlian Kalfayan, Jackie Daghlian Barnes and Caroline Daghlian Stec, and by two nieces and four nephews. A private family service was held on April 13 at Ararat Cemetery of Fresno. □



Hermine Fermanian

Hermine Vartanian Fermanian of Los Angeles, CA passed away on August 8, 2020. She was 91 years old.

Hermine was born on February 24, 1929 in Aleppo, Syria, to Aram and Azniv Vartanian from Aintab. She grew up in the Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church of Aleppo and attended the Church's Emmanuel School and was heavily involved in its Chanitz church youth organization. She was an outstanding student who skipped 6th grade and enrolled as a 7th grader at Aleppo College for Girls. She graduated with distinction, receiving the highest honors. She was rewarded a scholarship from Aleppo college with the understanding that she would

return upon completion and teach there. She then attended the Beirut College for Women (BCW) for two years. In her freshman year, her name was engraved on the "Scholarship Cup," an honor given only to the student who had the highest academic grade in the entire school.

Upon graduation from BCW, she returned to teach at her "Alma Mater" Aleppo College from 1949 to 1969. Despite not being much older than her own students, she quickly gained their trust, confidence, and respect. She taught math and science, and it was one of her many accomplishments to motivate girls from all backgrounds in these subjects. But her work went beyond her instructional abilities. She was a mentor to her students and connected with them on another level forming lifelong bonds no matter where in the world they were.

She gave up on an opportunity to continue her higher education at UCLA for love. In 1957 Hermine married Berj Fermanian, and they were blessed with the birth of their daughter, Maral.

In 1969 Hermine, and daughter, Maral came to the United States seeking permanent residency in Los Angeles. She was sponsored by the Armenian Mesrobian school for her expertise, experience, and ability to speak both English and Armenian. This enabled her to sponsor Berj to arrive in 1971. While Berj established a travel agency, Hermine continued as the registrar at Mesrobian for 9 years. In 1978, she accepted a position at University of Southern California, School of Electric Engineering, Department of Laser and Research where she was instrumental in coordinating all department functions for 16 years.

In the greater community, Mrs. Fermanian was involved in revitalizing an existing alumni organization chairing it for many years, which became the Aleppo College Alumni Association. They joined hands and continued to organize activities, raise funds and financially support needy Armenian girls in Aleppo to afford them the opportunity for a high school education. Hermine was also a member of the C & E Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School's Women's Auxiliary, one of the major support groups of the School.

Hermine leaves behind a rich legacy in education, which is widely acknowledged, revered and respected by hundreds of Aleppo College students and peers. Her memory is instilled with joy, delight and love in the souls of all those whom she touched.

Hermine is survived by her daughter Maral Fermanian Horton and her husband Floyd, three grandchildren, Steven, Katie and Rebecca, her brother Gabriel Vartanian and his family and her sister Rose Vartanian. She was predeceased by her husband Berj. Due



to current CDC guidelines of the COVID-19 pandemic, a private family funeral service was held on August 20. Memorial donations may be made to Merdinian School Women's Auxiliary, designated to scholarships for needy students, mailed to 13330 Riverside Dr., Sherman Oaks, CA 91423 or AMAA for Armenian Evangelical School of Aleppo. □

Arminé Esther Manoukian

Arminé Esther Salibian Manoukian of San Jose, CA passed away on April 28, 2020 at the age of 84.



Esther was born to Rev. Vahram and Mrs. Yevnige Salibian in Lebanon, the eldest of six children. As a student, she was one of the brightest in her class and excelled at every subject, especially English and Math.

Esther's heart was for learning, teaching, and ministry. She attended Central High School in Beirut and graduated from Beirut College for Women with a bachelor's degree in English Literature. She later completed her teaching credential in the United States and taught in the Bay Area. Most importantly, Esther was dedicated to teaching children about the Good News of Jesus Christ.

After finishing college, Esther married George Manoukian. Their blessed union enabled them to seek the lost together, wherever and whenever the Lord led. They graduated from the Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) Leadership Training Institute in Switzerland in 1973. Besides involvement in CEF, George and Esther were active members of Gideons International.

In 1975, war erupted in Lebanon but the Manoukians were spared bullets and bombs. Together with their five children (Christine, Sylvia, Norair, Lena and Ari), they left Beirut and settled in the United States in 1976. Later, the Lord called them to partner with the AMAA and CEF to oversee the translation of CEF materials into Armenian and establish a CEF office in Armenia. During their 9 trips to Armenia, George and Esther visited villages where they trained and equipped hundreds of teachers. As a result, thousands of children in need of hope were able to hear the Gospel, accept Jesus, and experience assurance of salvation.

Esther was a faithful woman of God and an inspiration to all who knew her. She was a prayer warrior and loved to memorize God's Word. She cared deeply for those around her and was quick to recognize the needs and well-being of others. Esther was humble, gracious, bold and eager to share her faith with others. Even in her last days, she prepared Gideon Bibles to give as gifts to whomever she would come in contact with, especially medical workers during hospital visits. Her faith remained vibrant and steadfast even in the midst of unfortunate diagnoses.

George and Esther were married for 60 years until George passed away in 2018. Their legacy will live on in the lives of their five children, sixteen grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. □

Joseph Mazujian

Joseph (Joe) Mazujian of Wayne, NJ, passed away peacefully on July 2, 2020 at the age of 96.



Joe was born in Newark and lived in Belleville, Kearny and Clifton before moving to Wayne in 2000. He spent his early years in Belleville and received his education at Belleville High School, graduating with the Class of 1941. He went on for further study at Seton Hall University.

In anticipation of succeeding his father in the family dry cleaning and tailoring business – Kearny Cleaners in Kearny, NJ – Joe graduated from the National Institute of Dry Cleaning in Silver Spring, MD. For 26 years, he and his brother Edward ran the business until 1974. Joe then went to work for the International Mail Division of the U.S. Postal Service and retired in 1992.

He served as a member and Past President of the Kearny Optimist Club and was a member of the Vestry at Saint John's Episcopal Church in Passaic. Most recently he was a member of Saint Michael's Episcopal Church in Wayne and was a member of the Copestone-Ophir Masonic Lodge #108 in Kearny.

Joe proudly served in the United States Air Force during World War II in the Pacific Theater. As a Staff Sergeant, he was a radio operator and gunner on B24 Bombers.

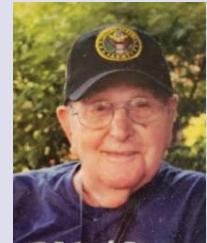
Joe and his beloved wife Ann (nee Broojian) had thirty-seven years of "a marriage made in heaven" before Ann's passing in 1994. Joe is survived by his son David Aram Mazujian of East Hampton. He was predeceased by his son Stephen Edward Mazujian in 2014, and by two siblings, brother Edward Mazujian and sister Sara Iskendarian.

A funeral service was held on July 9, at the Vander May Wayne Colonial Funeral Home followed by interment at George Washington Memorial Park, Paramus, NJ.

Memorial donations may be made to the Armenian Missionary Association of America. □

George Nazarian

George Nazarian, a native of Niagara Falls, NY passed away on June 30, 2020, surrounded by his family. He was 93.



George was born to Manoog Nazarian and Takouhi (Queenie) Monoogian on July 16, 1926. He was a resident of Mobile, AL for 51 years. Upon graduation from Niagara Falls High School in 1944, he served his country in Europe during World War II in the Army's 94th Infantry Division. After receiving his honorable discharge in 1946, he attended and graduated from the University of Buffalo in 1952 with degrees in German and Chemistry. He was employed by Union Carbide/UOP as a chemist for almost 40 years.

In 1955, George married Rosemary Eghigian. Mr. Nazarian was proud of his Armenian heritage. He was a supporter of the AMAA throughout his life, was a volunteer at Providence Hospital for over 20 years and was a life-long fan of Notre Dame football.

George was preceded in death by his wife of 63 years, Rosemary; one son, Eric Edward Nazarian; sister, Hermine Rebarick; and brother, Arnold (Kathy) Nazarian. He is survived by children, Carl George Nazarian, Aram Philip (Ana) Nazarian, and Ruth Takouhi Nazarian; grandchildren, Sara Nazarian, Mary Nazarian, and Bre'Yanna Brazier; sister, Gladys (Joe) Ciraolo; and other relatives.

A graveside service was held on July 7, in Pine Crest Cemetery in Mobile, AL. □

Angel Levonian Parseghian

Angel Levonian Parseghian passed peacefully on July 21, 2020 in Belmont, MA surrounded by her loving family. She was 98.



Angel was born June 14, 1922 to Victoria Halebian and Levon Levonian in Aleppo, Syria. She came to the United States with her family at the age of 12.

Angel selflessly and lovingly took care of her family, always making sure that she kept everyone well-fed, whether it be at her home or at her cherished cottage at Crystal Lake, NH. Cooking was her joy and her favorite pastime, next to her incredible love and support of her family. Her warmth, consummate dedication and organizational skills were far reaching into every aspect of her life. She was a long-standing member and tireless worker for her beloved Armenian Memorial Church, a 40+ year volunteer for Mt. Auburn Hospital, Belmont Garden Club, Belmont Women's Club, Armenian Women's Educational Club and Order of The Eastern Star.

Angel was predeceased by her husband Richard of 61 years and is survived by her children, Arnold Parseghian of Wayland, MA, Eileen Hertel of Dover, NH and Wayne Parseghian and his wife, Susan of Arlington, MA. Angel was a loving grandmother to Holly Hertel Forsyth and her husband Todd, Scott Parseghian and his wife Michelle, Jeffrey Hertel of Alton, NH, Michael Parseghian and his wife Stacia, and Ani and Arpi Parseghian. She was also blessed with six great-grandchildren: Dante, Damien, Jack, Avery, Penn and Leigh. Loving nieces and nephews mourn her loss as well.

In addition, the family is grateful to Angel's wonderful caregivers for their love and devotion.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a private family interment was held and a celebration of life will be planned at a future date. Donations may be made in her memory to the AMAA or to the Armenian Memorial Church, of Watertown, MA. □

Barbara Solakian

Barbara Haroian Solakian of Weston, MA, a long-time member of the AMAA's Armenian Children's Milk Fund Program, passed away peacefully at her home on June 13, 2020. She was 81.



Barbara was born on November 22, 1938 in Medford, MA. She was a graduate of Lexington High School and Tufts University in 1960. After college, she worked for many years at Harvard University. Barbara married John Solakian in 1962 and made family and home her number one priority. She served on numerous boards of trustees and volunteer committees at her children's schools and was dedicated in her service to the First Armenian Church of Belmont, MA.

Barbara was the beloved wife of John Solakian. Dear daughter of the late Elizabeth Demerjian Haroian and Nishan Haroian. Devoted mother of Mark Solakian and his wife Christine, and Stephanie Solakian Goldstein and her husband Randall. Cherished grandmother of Catherine, Caroline, Andrew and William. Loving sister of Susan Dupont and her husband Jacques, and Marcia Smith and her partner Peter Simon. Gracious aunt of Matthew Dupont, Jonathan Smith and Heather Smith. Adored relative and friend to many.

Funeral services and interment were held privately. A celebration of Barbara's life will be planned for a later date. □

Naomi Topalian

Naomi Getsoyan Topalian of Lexington, MA passed away on July 19, 2020. She was 92.



Naomi was a graduate of the American University in Beirut, Lebanon and Boston University School of Nursing. She had a long career as a registered nurse working at numerous hospitals. She also taught nursing. Naomi was an accomplished author and wrote several books and received many awards for her work including being inducted into the Hall of Fame at American Biographical Institute (ABI) in North Carolina. She was active in the Armenian community, serving on committees and teaching the youth.

Naomi was the beloved wife of the late Paul G. Topalian. Devoted mother of Janet Topalian-Moffatt and her husband Stephen Eric Moffatt of Burlington and the late Andrew Paul Topalian. Loving grandmother of Jessica Obleschuk and her husband Nick, Alexander Stephen Moffatt and his fiancé Kristina and Drew Topalian. Dear sister of Merzia Cronin of Belmont and the late Sarkis Getzoyan, Parouhi Jacobsen and Habib Getzoyan. She is also survived by 3 generations of loving nieces and nephews.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and public safety measures, funeral services were private. A public celebration of life will be planned for a later date. The family requests donations be made in her memory to the Armenian Missionary Association of America. □

The AMAA Board of Directors and staff wish to extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of the following deceased friends.

* Nevart Aposhian Newtown Square, PA	* Vartouhi Chelebian Tarzana, CA	Rosina Mincherian São Paulo, Brazil
* Alice Atamian Jamaica Plain, MA	Dr. Johnny Haddad Aleppo, Syria	* Lorraine Paul Campbell, CA
* Jessica Bezjian Beirut, Lebanon	Alice Hovenanian Winchester, MA	* Knarik Saghdejian Muftikian Montreal, QC, Canada
* Jack Birebirian Covina, CA	Helen Demirjian Kadaman Hollywood, CA	Hasmig Yankelovich Chestnut Hill, CA
Shahe Boziakalian Aleppo, Syria	* Dickranouhie Keshishian Novi, MI	Silva Zadourian Fort Lee, NJ
* Armenouhi Charkhedian Granada Hills, CA	Nishan Kisoyan Waltham, MA	* Marie Apovian Ziegler Oradell, NJ

* Memorial donations designated for AMAA

Official Call to the 101st Annual Meeting Of the Armenian Missionary Association of America

The 101st Annual Meeting of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) will be held via Zoom Conference on Saturday, October 24, 2020 at 11:00 am ET (8:00 am PT).

All members of the AMAA are invited to attend the Meeting to:

1. Consider and approve the reports of the Officers, Committees, Chapters and Affiliated Boards of the Association for the fiscal year 2018-2019;
2. Review the financial reports for the fiscal year 2018-2019;
3. Announce the names of the newly elected Board members;
4. Elect members to the Nominating Committee;
5. Elect an Auditor; and
6. Consider and address any other business that may come before the membership.



Received With Thanks

The AMAA acknowledges with gratitude receipt of the following new publications.

GOD IS ALWAYS WITH US, EVEN IN TSUNAMI Illustrations by Lucy Janjigian, Story by Miriam Kishi

PAINTINGS by Lucy Janjigian



WE ARE NOT ALONE

Christ is with you not forlorn
He knows the future
This is our hope into our nurture
Real joy and peace is promised for our future
All given by grace of Christ despite our sinful nature.

By George R. Phillips, Sr.

**FOR 100+ YEARS, AMAA HAS BUILT, SUPPORTED
& SUSTAINED COMMUNITY STRUCTURES IN THE NEAR EAST**



Armenian Evangelical College



Central High School

LEBANON EMERGENCY APPEAL

FOR THE PAST 10 YEARS, AMAA HAS REBUILT, SUPPORTED & SUSTAINED SPIRITUAL AND EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURES IN SYRIA



Haigazian University

The damage from the explosion that took innocent Lebanese lives and wounded thousands in Beirut is beyond extensive and bearable.

The AMAA is committed to unabashedly continue its indiscriminative emergency assistance of **food, provision, medicine** and **shelter** to our communities in the Near East, injecting resilience and revival.

Lebanon has given a lot. It's time to give back. Please consider helping the families suffering loss of their loved ones, homes, churches, and schools.

Here are four ways you can donate today.

1. **To mail a check:** AMAA, 31 W Century Road Paramus, NJ 07652 memo: Lebanon Urgent Relief
2. **To make an online donation:** Visit amaa.org/LebanonRelief
3. **To make a wire transfer:** Please call (201.265.2607 x107) or email mpoulos@amaa.org for wiring instructions
4. **To make a donation via phone:** Please call (201.265.2607 x126)





Armenian Missionary Association of America
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Paramus, NJ 07652

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Then and Now... The stained glass window of the **First Armenian Evangelical Church of Beirut, Lebanon**. The original was installed when the Church building was erected in 1950. Sadly it is shattered now due to the Beirut explosion on August 4, 2020.